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PECULIARITY OF SOCIAL WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Master thesis

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

Homelessness is a concern for policymakers, individuals, agencies, and society as a whole. Homelessness can be described as a symptom and cause of extreme poverty and exclusion today and pushes the European political agenda to its brim. The Lisbon Declaration (2021) thus acknowledged the latter and added that it thus affects people's physical, mental health, employment and thus affect all Member States. Homeless people have the same human right as everyone. The European Court of Human Rights (2020) specifies the right to a house, a protected home and family; the right to be protected against inhuman and degrading treatment. According to the Homeless World Cup Foundation (2020), the homeless population, as estimated by the United Nations in 2005, 100million people are homeless worldwide. The definition of homelessness and youth varies between context and countries. However, according to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2019), there are about a 4.1million homeless people in the European Union. According to the Youth Rights! Right Now! Ending youth homelessness A Human Rights Guide (2016) shows that in most European Union, 20-30 per cent of homeless people are young people between the ages of 18-29 years. The different divinations of homelessness used in different countries make it difficult to provide comparative statistics on homelessness, even between European Union countries. To choose better intervention measures to prevent youth homelessness, the concept, causes and consequences must be analysed Haile et al. (2020). Recent literature on social workers' experiences with homeless people has mainly focused on working with the general homeless population and not specifically on social work with homeless youth. For example, research that emphasises social workers' experiences can be seen in the study done by Brown et al. (2019), exploring factors like job satisfaction, burnout and organisational commitment in the US. The finding reveals that even though salaries were a motivating factor, social workers face burnout due to caseload and job demand while working with homeless people. Job demand in another research was associated with psychological distress that impacted social workers and their community and families (Itzick & Kagan 2017). Social workers who work with homeless people are also prone to taking sick leaves also accidents may occur during practice. (Wirth et al., 2019). Another research also indicated that working with the homeless results in long-term psychological strain even though they got more job satisfaction from the valuable appreciation from the client. Wirth et al. (2019) and Robelski et al. (2020) expresses the need for social workers' occupational health to reduce workplace violence, challenges, bureaucracy, and the effect client experiences has

on social workers working with refugees and the homeless. Schiff & Lane (2019) indicate the reinforcement of mental health issues faced by social workers working with homeless people and the impact of little success seen despite the heavy caseload, hard work and an emphasis on using professional boundaries as a coping strategy in working with homeless people Kennedy et al. (2010), indicated the difficulties working with homeless youth because of the traumatic events they have experiences and also have multiple material needs and tend to distrust services providers and staffs. Looking at youth homelessness from multiple vantage points often allows a significant change in perspective as the perception is organized into a new whole (Jura & Bukaliya 2015). Hence is important to understand the connections between the various aspects of a homeless young person life that influence behaviour. When one part of the subsystem is strengthened, it impacts the whole system (Payne 2014). Therefore the systemic perspective emphasises the importance of clients' capacity to affect their circumstances taking into consideration behaviour and motivation (Payne 2014). Looking at the cause and consequences of young homeless youths, from the system perspective, will allow us to see the interrelationship between the event, pattern, and system and seek better ways to carry out interventions. However, systems theory has been critiqued that although it provides a framework of making sense of an interaction system, it does constrain workers from attaining all the components in reality. Approaching the individual circumstances of young homeless persons might not explain their present circumstances. For example, homeless young people suffering from mental illness need a unique individual intervention. The worker may still find where the problem lies, but looking for solutions at the policy and cultural level might become a challenge. Ronnau & Poertner (1993) goes further to add that in a complex system, it is difficult to determine the exact relationship between the various elements in the system. It might also become complicated when dealing with child abuse as a cause of homelessness to question which part of the system is the problem, and this can cause the social worker to become overwhelmed.

Conflict theory also emphasizes how society functions and affects individuals who become homeless. The two main factors of Karl Marx conflict theory are economic wealth and power. This theory views society as a continuous conflict because of competition for limited resources. Every society is plagued by inequality based on social differences between the dominant group and all other groups (Weber & Marx 1993). Through inheritance, wealthy families can keep their privileged social position for their members. The family can also be a source of conflict, including physical violence and emotional cruelty, for its members. In most capital cities worldwide, women, children, and men live in a homeless situation; it is a serious social problem yet ignored by most.

Marxist theories suggest socialism whereby all will work, and benefit is shared amongst its citizens. Therefore many will not become homeless because they will own a house or pay their rent and live a better quality of life. Critics of Marxist theory assume that class struggle is oversimplified and radical. Generally, the existing policy landscape ignores young people experiencing homelessness. This might happen because of the specificity of their needs that can be affected by structural barriers and system failure, according to (European Observatory on Homelessness, 2019). Indeed from the example mentioned earlier, it is clear that there is the necessity to throw more light on social workers experiences working with homeless youth by listening to their own stories. A more elaboration into this perspective will allow agencies, service providers and social work educational providers and those working with the homeless to understand the challenges of social workers better and provide support so they can carry out their job effectively.

Youth homelessness is a crucial aspect of every society that needs consideration. Social work with homeless young people has distinctive characteristics. To provide evidence to the latter aspect, it is vital to listen to the experiences of social workers who work with young homeless people. Therefore, the following research question is considered; what are the causes, consequences and concepts of youth homelessness; How it is like to provide social services to young homeless people?; what are the peculiarities of social work with young homeless people?

The **objec**t of the study is social work with young homeless people.

The goal of this research: To disclose the peculiarities of social work with young homeless people.

The objectives of the study:

1. To analyze the concept, causes and consequences of youth homelessness.

2. To identify ways of providing social assistance to homeless people at the theoretical level.

3. To highlight the experiences of social workers working with young homeless people.

A theoretical analysis of relevant studies and knowledge that deals with this thesis's objectives are examined. This provides a comprehensive background for the understanding of youth homelessness. A qualitative research strategy accompanied by a semi-structured interview with 5 social workers as participants used to collect data was appropriate for this thesis. Content analysis method is used for interview analysis of the data collected using semi-structured questions.

A theoretical analysis of relevant studies and knowledge that deals with this thesis's objectives will be examined. This will provide a comprehensive background for understanding aspects of youth homelessness. A qualitative research strategy accompanied with a semi-structured interview with social workers as participants will be used to collect data as the appropriate method for this thesis.

Content analysis method shall be used for interview analysis of the data collected using a semi-structured questions method.

This thesis is structured into 3 parts, part introduction, part 1, concept, causes and consequences, and this part have 3 subsections; part 2, social service provision to young homeless people, sub-divided into 4 subsections; part 3 the experiences of social workers working with young homeless people, sub-divided into 6 sub-sections and then followed by the discussion, conclusions, recommendation abstract references and appendix.

1. CONCEPT, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

1.1. Concept of homelessness

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, last updated in (2021), the word homeless as an adjective means someone with no permanent residence or home. In old English, the word hamleas was used to indicate homeless not until 1857 that the word home became a noun and was used to describe a homeless person. Homelessness was constantly being associated with an unfortunate poor person without a house or nationality. They were described as physically and spiritually deprived of security. Furthermore, the word homeless was first used in the US in the 1870s to describe travellers crossing the country searching for work. Also, it was used to describe men in crisis wandering with no objective. With this perception, the main focus of what it means to be homeless is on the loss of character, morals, and lack of home. During the 19th-century industry revolution, many people moved into the urban areas in search of work. They were known as lodge because of their tenancy, and they lived in what was known as vagrants; hence they were described as vagabonds. Vagabonds were regarded as beggars, outcasts, strong, often in conflict with the law (Kusmer 2002). Francis Wayland, a Baptist minister and a moral philosopher in 1877, went further to describe vagabonds as tramps, lazy, swaggering shiftless, reclaimed cowardly, conditioned and utterly deprived savage to express his disdain for the way they way being treated and their living conditions, (Wayland 1877). Most of those who could now be described homeless were young able body white men of about 21 years, who came into the cities with their own culture. This new culture seems to endanger and anger the main structured society. After the World war 11 most of these young able men aged, disable poor, become homeless and dependent on the welfare system. They live in inhumane conditions in the poorest neighbourhoods in America. In the 1980s the word homelessness become prominent in-laws and legislations due to the deinstitutionalisation of the mentally ill, high rate of unemployment, shortage of affordable housing communicable disease, loIn today's society, every individual has the right to a decent and secure home everyday life becomes complicated and stressful without a home (Stenius-Ayoade 2019). The concept of homelessness is a broad one. It can be interpreted and defined in many ways. On its web page, the United Nations High commissioner describes individuals experiencing homelessness as not having safe, stable and adequate housing or the resources and ability to obtain it. The United Nations for Economic and Social Council, on the report of the Secretary General (2019), goes further to emphasise that homelessness is not only a lack of physical housing. It is associated with the loss of the sense to

belong, the malfunction of multiple systems whose responsibility is to allow individuals to benefit from economic growth and lead a safe and decent life.

In the United Kingdom, a homeless person does not have accommodation available in the United Kingdom or abroad; even though they have the legal right to occupancy; are at risk of violence, unable to secure entry are in a movable structure when housing is physically accessible, available and is reasonable for the person to continue to live in. The local authorities are responsible for housing. They have the discretional decision to determine housing needs within its jurisdiction as stipulated in part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, Department for Communities and Local Government (2016). The Housing Act 1996 for England and Wales expanded the definition by emphasising the importance of the homeless person to fall under the category of priority need, statutory homeless or being threatened with homeless to be assumed a homeless person. This definition excludes several vulnerable people the right to an accommodation with circumstances beyond their control even if they are sleeping rough. Some of the individuals excluded are single persons, immigrants, and unaccompanied children from this definition.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD n.d) defines homelessness according to The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 as individuals sleeping in a place that is not meant for humans. It thus includes homeless people, meaning those who lack regular fixes and adequate night-time residence, living in public areas or private shelters. It also consists of those at imminent risk of homelessness who lack the resources and may lose their primary night-time residence. In addition, unaccompanied youth under twenty-five of age, who do not have a lease, have experienced persistent instability due to special needs or barriers and those that are fleeing domestic violence and physical abuse are also under the category of homeless, United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (2018), National Association of Social Workers (2021).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) describes homelessness as a state of not having a stable living alternative with the following criteria, a short and un-extendable occupancy, inadequate and having no control of accessible space to socialise. This definition emphasises the Anglo American and European interpretation of a home meaning identified in Mallett (2004) research. The absences of privacy, security, safety, stability, and the ability to control one living space are homelessness's basics and conceptual framework.

The European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) (2017), developed by FEANTSA, describe homelessness as people sleeping rough, in emergency accommodation, roofless, living in insure and inadequate housing. The ETHOS definition of homelessness thus

considers all aspects, including those to be released from jail, those in drug rehabilitation, institutions, immigrant and psychiatry hospital. It is clear from this perspective that all human beings need safe and secure housing no matter their circumstances. Finland also thus cooperated the definition of FEANTSA and goes further to elaborate that those living in nursing homes, institutions for the mentally disabled, prisoners to be realised and those living with friends and family or wandering are also seen as needing a home (Tilastokeskus 2021) & (The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland 2018). The variations from the definitions above could clearly explain why it is statistically challenging to develop a unique definition of what constitutes homelessness based on the assumption that every county or institution has its definition classification and categorisation of homelessness. Therefore, for this thesis, FEANTSA and The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland definition will be used to describe homelessness or rooflessness. Even though the definition of homelessness has been examined, the variations in the definition affect how gender is characterised, especially women. Bretherton (2018) indicated that most homeless people are male, resulting in about 70 per cent, while women are often the majority of the homeless population. This lower representation of women may be due to the paucity of data and research on family homelessness than single homelessness data among men. According to The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (2020) data, about 4,341 homeless people living in Finland, of which number 1054 are long-term homeless. The number of homeless people in the Helsinki drops to about 217 since 2019; Young homeless people less than 25 years accounting for about 854. For clarifications purposes, it is vital to define the meaning of youth or young person in this thesis. The Finnish youth Act of 2006 and the youth degree of 2006 describe youth as someone below 29 years.

According to the online Merriam-Webster dictionary, youth is the time between childhood and maturity; it is a period of development, growth and existence. It is a period wherein young people are powerless and vulnerable, less responsible, dependent, ignorant, engage in risky behaviours, and resilient (Wyn &White 2012). Until about 1930, young people were individuals described as a source of cheap labour and property of their parents. Youth as a distinct stage of life did not exist as a political or social right. In the early nineteenth century, young people's fragility, vulnerability and innocence came to light, and childhood was observed through the lens of learning and development. In the process of socially constructing who an adult is, the meaning of adulthood was defined, the rules and conditions of their development were outlined. On the negative side, young people lack rational judgment (Soung Patricia 2011). From the psychological perspective young as in Erik Erikson's 1950/1963 eight stages of psychosocial development, as indicated in (Knight 2017), is the

period of school age, adolescence. A young adult is categorised as industrious versus inferiority, identity cohesion versus role confusion and intimacy versus isolation. Thus it can be concluded that it is a challenging period for young people in their developmental stage. Without prejudice to other members states definition of youth, the United Nations define youth for statistics purposes as those individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years. The words youth and young person or people are interchangeable in this thesis. Youth is also the transition period from childhood to adulthood. It is also the period of becoming independent, and age is the most appropriate way to define this population. In many countries, it is the period of completing compulsory education and integration into the labour market. The definition of youth was first referred to in 1981 by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on International youth Year, United Nations General Assembly (1982). Although this definition was endorsed and accepted, it does vary in different societies, states and countries around the world. In 2007 and 2008, the General Assembly resolution also reinforces the age 15-24 as age-group for youths (United Nations General Assembly 2008). The following table from the United Nations Youth throws more light on the variation of age gap in the definition of youth from different organizations and countries:

Table 1 Youth age according to various institutions

Entity/Instrument/ Organization	Age	Reference
UN Secretariat/UNESCO/ILO	Youth: 15-24	UN Instruments, Statistics
UN-Habitat (Youth Fund)	Youth 15-32	Agenda 217
UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA	Adolescent: 10-19, Young People: 10-24, Youth: 15-24	UNFPA
UNICEF /The Convention on Rights of the Child	Child until 18	UNICEF
The African Youth Charter	Youth: 15-35	African Union, 2006

Source United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) (2005)

The concept of homeless is defined in context and seen in different countries differently. Homelessness affects young people, such as anxiety, sleep disorder, substance misuse and social isolation, Digby & Fu (2017). FEANTSA (2019) indicated that;

"Youth homelessness occurs where an individual between the ages of 13 and 26 is experiencing rooflessness or houselessness or is living in insecure or inadequate housing without a parent, family member or other legal guardian."

This definition is based on the knowledge that young people experiencing homelessness have a different pathway into homelessness. Hence, their needs are distinct and need a specific youth-oriented measure of homelessness. De Reus (2001) indicated that youth homelessness is more challenging than adults because it is a mosaic segment of the underclass. The concept of youth homelessness is beyond official statistics, and their vulnerability exposes them to situations where they have nowhere to call home. In the United Kingdom, youth homelessness is focused on statutory homelessness, a priority needs. Young people often fall into rough sleepers, hostel dwellers, sofa-surfer or living in crowded accommodation (Small et al. 2017). The heterogeneity of this population also makes it challenging to have a concert definition of what constitutes youth homelessness.

According to Ravenhill (2008), in order to prevent homelessness, it is essential to understand the homeless culture. Homeless culture revolves around the support needs of the group, the need to belong and be able to feel secure. Homeless people also have their dress demeanour, language, and behaviour, which creates an identity. However, those who don't want to belong to this cultural group quickly get help, join mainstream society, and get out of homelessness. It is rather unfortunate that it becomes difficult to get out when people get cut into this web of culture. This is due to the intensity of the friendship and network formed early on.

On the whole, the concept of youth homelessness can be properly define by taking into consideration, age, situation country, needs and culture. It is a challenge to come up with a unique definition and statics of the population of homeless young people because of the conflicting ideas about how to define this concept. Also a homeless youth is one without a permanent home, sleeping rough and in an insecure environment.

1.2 Types and causes of homelessness

There are different types of homelessness: chronic, transitional, hidden, and episodic homelessness. Moiz (2020) examines these four types of homelessness as; thus, chronic homelessness refers to individuals who have been continuously homeless for more than a year, have multiple health issues, are old, and live in places that are not suitable for humans habitation. Prolonged homelessness can quickly become chronic when the standard housing approach is insufficient. Either has not been an adequate housing approach tailored to individual needs. While it is crucial to address long-term

homelessness, youth might not have been too long enough to be categorised as a priority for addressing long-term homelessness. However, young homeless people have complex needs, and when these needs are not met, they will fall into the category of long-term homeless. Many long-term homeless people began as youth. (Moiz (2020) explains that episodic homelessness is associated with those individuals, who have experienced at least three episodes of homelessness in the previous years, are currently homeless. This type of homelessness can be primarily observed in young people who have disability conditions, use drugs, and have mental health and health problems. This group of individuals can self exit homelessness than other people using social services. Transitional homelessness is more common and is associated with young people. They generally seek shelter, or temporary housing, a system for a short stay, either due to sudden life changes. They are more likely to be lone individuals who lack any social support (FEANTSA 2010). Finally, hidden homelessness is specific to individuals who live temporarily with relatives and friends, characterised as couch-surfing, without any prospect of acquiring their own home or staying long-term. This population does not appear in the standard homeless statistics in many countries, and they do not seek housing support and social services even though they need them. From the types mentioned earlier of homelessness, a young person can easily fall into any of these types, depending on the country and context, and how the social welfare system is organised to cater to homeless people of varying ages. The following chapter will analyse the cause and consequences of youth homelessness.

There are conflicting ideas about the cause of homelessness. This has led some researchers to coin a new way to describe it as the new orthodoxy. It implies that it is not only the structural factor that causes homelessness but also a combination of individuals with personal problems who are more vulnerable to these macro-structural forces. Even though this ideology does not fully explain the causes of homelessness, it does suggest what structural and individual factors cause homelessness. These factors include interpersonal, housing and economic structures and respective attributions. Although this new concept opens the doors to new ideas, it has been criticised that it is more ideological than empirical; it requires more robust data to demonstrate that the factors mentioned above may trigger homelessness (Ravenhill 2008).

Young homeless people are generally portrayed in the media in many different ways. Family violence is most used as a significant cause of youth homelessness. In other circumstances, they voluntarily leave home because they want the freedom to exploit the world and enjoy the big cities. Also, they are depicted as rebellious teens who do not want to do the dishes, stay in school, or get a job but run away from home for unfounded reasons, as described by the (Canadian Observatory on

Homelessness 2021). These perceptions might be accurate in some cases, but the reality is much different to those young people experiencing homelessness. It is most common for youth homelessness to be cut in family dysfunction. Compared to their housing counterpart, a study carried out by (Ramírez-Uclés et al. 2018) found out that those experiencing homelessness reported a higher rate of parental rejection; parents do not monitor nor support their children. As a result, some youth run away from home because of stress and parent conflicts.

Family conflict is one of several characteristics that make young people leave home and find themselves on the streets. In some cases, conflict might occur due to poor communication, leading to a catalyst of disagreement and making resolving the problem challenging (Overall & McNulty, 2017). Verbal aggression between parents and adolescents due to dysfunctional family communication patterns leads to homelessness, compared to those young who have better communication patterns with their parents. Those children who cannot stand this type of behaviour will run away from home (Busby & Hsin-Yao, 2017). The lack of warmth that keeps the family together is often caused by incomprehension among family members. When parents are not responsive to their children's needs and demands, the child might wander away from home and find themselves on the street or in their friends' houses.

Family conflict is not the only determinant of youth homelessness; a change in the family composition may also lead to tension among family members. The implications of family breakdown due to divorce, remarriage or death often create serious problems, including behavioural changes in the children (Langlais et al. 2018). Adapting out of a two-parent family into another type has a negative effect on a child's development than transitioning into a two-parent family. Adaptation may involve a new family member that may be a step-parent; a new guardian figure within the home is often associated with increased conflict. Most youths reported a lack of respect for their parents, anger, and resentment, leading to upheaval and parental control and care. The outcome is often seen in children's socio-emotional and developmental aspects, especially among white kids when it comes to transitioning out of two-parents and transitioning into two-parent was more negative for Hispanic children (Lee, & McLanahan, 2015). Peculiarities of family transition can be found when young people are placed into shelters or foster care. Most children are placed into foster care due to abuse, abandonment, incarceration, death, medical neglect, truancy or voluntary placement, drug addiction and mental illness. The foster institution is designed for temporal care. Still, in most cases, children aged out. Most children above 18 years might likely run away and become homeless due to lack of resources, housing insufficiency, and financial support (Crosland & Dunlap, 2015).

On the other hand, young people, who perceive a stronger bond with their parents, and are not rejected, are more likely not to leave home nor engage in asocial behaviour (Ehsan et al., 2017). Many young homeless people report many issues related to conflicts at home with their caregivers, including parents not wanting them, sexual orientation, drugs and alcohol, religious belief, physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and chaos in the family (Wampler & McWey 2020). Furthermore, disagreement between caregivers and youths regarding romantic partner also bring about conflict. In other circumstances, parent and young people perception of the conflict is often different. The parents often assume that the responsibility to change lies on the child and not the caregiver or parent. Conflicting perspective like this often leads to the young person's decision to leave home when the family environment is problematic. Wampler & McWey further explain that in American society; most of the young people who find themselves in shelters are often drop-off by their parents, usually after a conflict, some come voluntarily.

When young people are discriminated against, it limits accessibility to proper education and employment, thereby also limiting access to the services they need. In addition, discrimination is associated with stigmatisation. Sample & Ferguson (2020) carried out qualitative research to explore the perception of young homeless adult on structural barriers to housing and found out that discrimination act as a barrier to access to a home, thereby keeping them homeless. Moreover, when people of a social group are labelled, society tends to focus upon a person's difference and attribute a label to this difference, which means the person is viewed as an outsider. Labelling and stigmatizing homeless people have connotations of violent, aggressive, poor, dirty, and criminals. Unfortunately, discrimination does occur at all levels of society (Clair 2018).

Structural and system failure can also attribute to young people becoming homeless. Structural factors thus include aspects like poverty, lack of education, layoff, unemployment, bankruptcy, inequality, welfare and income policies, housing supply and affordability. Also, a lack of sufficient transition from child welfare, preliminary discharge plan and transition from mental health and correctional facilities, support for immigrants and refugees and lack o social connection, to name but a few. According to FEANTSA (2019), youth homelessness is essential as the outcome of inequality and social injustice evident in the system failure and structural barrier, not personal failure or individual situations. Morgan (2018) examines the effect of homelessness on young people and found out that only less than 25 per cent of them can complete high school. Most of them repeat grades, change schools, have the highest school dropout, and miss classes, usually suspended or dismissed due to behavioural, emotional and health problems. Education is necessary for employment and better living condition in the future. Sometimes the systems and policies may

exclude homeless youth from accessing better education. For example, extensive documentation demands, having to continuously prove their identity and justify their independent living situation, the fear of noncompliance with the agency standard discourages them from attempting the process (Leibson, 2016), (Thompson et al. 2010). A support network is also essential in the emotional stability of an individual coping in society. These provide tangible emotional support that may be vital in transitioning into employment. Some of these networks might come from families, friends. Lack of these support systems increases the chances of falling into the wrong hand, thereby becoming susceptible to substance misuse, unprotected sex, and risky behaviours that may lead to homeless (la Haye et al., 2012). Ryan & Thompson (2013), study 29 homeless emerging adults aged 18-23 years who seek housing through a one-to-one interview and found out that long-term commitment and flexibility in addressing specific barriers to acquiring housing are sometimes a hindrance to housing acquisition. Phillips (2015) also indicated in a research of the causes of homelessness and concluded that mental illness, availability of jobs, and drug problems are the leading cause of homelessness. Therefore when there is a lack of social services for young adults who seek housing and individuals suffering from a mental health condition, they might become homeless. The structural cause can also be associated with poverty and unemployment. Poverty is the absence of material resources to meet their minimum needs, including housing. Poverty impacts accessibility to better housing, and when a family is poor, children might not be able to go to school. As teenagers get older, the financial burden does increase on the parents; therefore, many young people become homeless not because of family dysfunction, victimisation, and abuse but because of poverty (Fry et al. 2017). Fry goes ahead to indicate that, as a young person grow older and starts to feel the burden to become responsible, they can no longer continue to stay at home. Young people might move out from their family home to seek a job or economic prospects and, in the process, seek refuge with friends. If they cannot find a job, their friendship deteriorates, and they risk becoming homeless. Also, a young person's poverty might be linked to other factors and limited to gambling, addiction problems, or criminal involvement; are the most disadvantaged in society in most aspects. Structural unemployment arises when the supply and demand for skills are unequal or mismatched. It could be caused by technological and innovation advancement and economic development that affects the whole world today. People with low skill levels, like the young homeless, are more exposed to the risk of not having a job. The only way countries can solve this problem is through educational schemes, for integrating young people in the labour force (Lane 2015). The weakening of the low skilled labour market position, advancement in digitalisation and in the industrial manufacturing sector has shifted the landscape of employment, resulting in lower

employment. Structural causes of homelessness may also be attributed to the nature of the welfare regimes in member states; a flexible welfare system will provide a variety of social support that will lower homelessness (Busch-Geertsema et al. 2010). Also, young skilled single women may not have the possibility of raising a child and getting employment, thereby putting them at risk of limited financial resources to get affordable accommodation hence a loss of their habitat and homelessness. Additionally, transitioning period from foster care system services often ends unexpectedly even though they need to continue. This un presumptions stop may be due to funding, eligibility criteria, lack of collaboration across services system and lack of sufficient knowledge about youth to adult development (Osgood et al. 2010).

A landlord may legally and physically remove a tenant from his house if a tenant did not pay their rent or some other reasons like end of rental agreement, disturbance, or a breach of the rental contract. According to Nasarre-Aznar (2016), eviction is involuntary removal of persons from their homes with many consequences, particularly for children and young people. There is a prediction that about one-quarter of those affected by eviction may become homeless. All the European member states have a policy and approach to eviction and complexity of the social and procedural anti-eviction method. Still, these laws and procedures do not protect all those experiencing evictions. Even though The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and Amnesty International (2018) article 8 emphasises the respect for family life and home, poor people are still not adequately protected from eviction, especially those young people who are experiencing mental health issues and addiction, Zivanovic, et al. (2016) study the correlation between loss of income and eviction amongst young homeless people and the results shows that 28.6 per cent of young people reported the loss of income that resulted into losing their home.

To summarise, homelessness can be chronic, transitional, hidden, and episodic homelessness. Even though there might be conflicting ideologies about the cause of young people becoming homeless, from the above explanation, there is an indication that family conflict, violence, change in family dynamic and composition, maltreatment, eviction, discrimination, structural and system failure are the cause of youth homelessness. Therefore the next chapter will examine the consequences of homelessness on young people.

1.3 Consequences of youth homelessness

Distinguishing between the consequences and the causes of homelessness on youth is often challenging. The effect might have occurred before the young person found themselves in a homeless situation or might happen while homeless. Bearing this in mind, the cause and effect of

homelessness becomes complex to dissect. This might be due to the specificity of their cases, family background, individual experiences and the context, Thompson et al. (2010). Not having a home increases young people's vulnerability to experiencing sexual victimisation, physical violence, and criminal activities compared to their housing counterparts. Ongoing victimisation may lead to attention and memory deficits and impede the ability to sense danger cues, respond, and interact appropriately to their environment (Bender et al. 2015). Physical and mental health problems, substance use and addiction, juvenile detention, educational deficit, and employment accessibility also affect young homeless people.

A fundamental issue concerning homeless people is that they lack shelter, sleep rough, and often experience insecurity. Lack of a home means that a young homeless person has no safe place they can call home, where they can keep their belongings, and they are at risk of experiencing violence, theft and sexual abuse (Brown et al. 2018). Rooflessness mean there is no place to make and eat nutritional food, no guarantee for a place to have personal hygiene. Personal hygiene is essential to protect one from becoming ill and spreading diseases to other people. In most urban areas, rough sleepers make the areas unattractive are constantly chased away. Eventually, when one has no place to call home or pass the night, it means they have no fixed address. Not having a fixed address means that access to some services may be denial. For example, one cannot get employment if they cannot provide a speech to the employer. The steep increase in housing rental prices, changes in tenancy laws, lack of low-cost housing in the majority of the European member states will hinder a homeless person from accessing housing (Baptista & Marlier 2019).

The experience of homelessness encompasses depression, emotional distress and suicide, as indicated by (Thompson et al. 2010). Many young people experience loneliness and lack emotional support as they battle with daily life while living on the streets. Emotional distress often leads to the psychological impact of mental illness like hyperactivity disorder, including anxiety, fear and developmental concerns. Therefore we may assume that short or long-term homelessness may lead to a risk of low-self esteem and depression. Many homeless young people with substance use disorder are also associated with mental health issues or conditions. The use of alcohol and drugs by a young person whose brain have not completely mature have a higher rate of co-occurrence of mental illness, such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, anxiety, psychosis, delirium, amnesia, schizophrenia, antisocial personality disorder and psychotic illness. Mental illness may cause severe functional problems, limit major life activities, and carry out normal activities of daily living. Limited major life activities will

increase dependency on caregivers and the social welfare system, (National Institute on Drug Abuse 2020).

Lightfoot et al. (2018) indicate that young people who have experience homeless for about two years are at higher risk of frequent use of substances and other behavioural factors like sensation seeking and delinquency. Homeless young people encounter a lot of challenging life circumstances, have a risky social support network, are more exposed to substance misuse and increased behavioural health risks; this might be correlated with a comprehensive social network of the young person on the street that creates accessibility to drugs like marijuana, heroin, alcohol and cocaine. The consequences of substance misuse amongst young homeless have been well researched and documented. Some youth may use drugs to numb their experiences, according to (Brown et al. 2020). The rate of consuming substances is limited to young homeless people. One study of homeless youth found out that former young people from care homes who are released to independent life consume higher rates of an illegal substance above the national level. It may be due to housing instability, the challenges of everyday life and the unpreparedness of managing alone after leaving child welfare homes (Greeno et al. 2019). The use of illegal substances may also result from a history of maltreatment, exposure to caregivers or parents who have been using drugs, mental illness; trauma, physical and psychological abuse. Ararso et al. (2021) state a correlation between homelessness, child abuse with substance use in a longitudinal study of adolescents to adults between the ages of 18-26 years; the findings show there are significant correlations between childhood abuse and the use of drugs that generally persist into adulthood and advice that this group constitute a high-risk population that requires specific attention. Some common types of substance use among young homeless persons include alcohol, heroin, cocaine, marijuana use and abuse, methamphetamine, inhalants, prescription, over the counter medication, shopping, sexual, internet and virtual world, to name but a few. The consequences of the consumption of drugs and alcohol lead to addiction. Addiction is any behaviour that an individual finds relief and therefore craves in the short-term, but suffers negative consequences in the long-term and doesn't give up despite the negative repercussions (Gabor Maté 2016). Addiction is a chronic disorder with biological, psychological, social and environmental factors influencing its development and maintenance (American Psychological Association 2021). Homelessness breeds a suitable environment for easy drug acquisition and consumption for young people; when a young person becomes used to substance use, the craving tolerance level increases. Hence exiting homelessness became more challenging because many substance abusers have a history of antisocial behaviour, nonconformity, deviance, acting out, impulsivity, and low self-esteem. It also impacts motivation, memory, impulse

control, and judgment that may hinder being housed. According to Skewes & Gonzalez (2013), there is an increased likelihood of addiction among children who are victims of abuse, stress trauma and poor parenting, especially with those young people who become homeless. These behaviours may lead to obstruction of the law and hence end up in juvenile detention. Homeless youth have a higher probability of spending time in juvenile detention than their housing counterparts. They are easily cut up in delinquent behaviour and are at a higher rate of victims of theft, sexual assault, prostitution and violent offences. Gold (2020) carried out a longitudinal study and exploited the relationship between hardship, poverty and inability to have a stable home and delinquent behaviours amongst young individuals and found out that about 60 per cent of those young people involved in delinquent behaviour have had instability in housing due to inability to pay rent and eviction.

Homelessness is sometimes blamed on the victims, or many may see homeless people as dirty, lazy, and disturbing the daily lives of ordinary people. Sexual minority groups are peculiar to find themselves on the street because of their sexual orientation and at a higher risk of stigmatization, discrimination when compared to other groups Gattis & Larson,(2016); McCann & Brown, (2019). Stigma reproduces social inequality by maintaining group hierarchies, Social closure, power, institutional practices, neighbourhood and social segregation, discriminatory laws that lead to prejudice and discrimination, and young homeless people are vulnerable to these aspects (Clair 2018).

Education is vital for a young person to integrate into mainstream society successfully. Young people who experience homelessness are often unstable in school; they constantly move from place to place, experiencing unwarranted school mobility. Excessive school mobility may lead to poor grades at school, and the general academic performance is usually poor. They are more often at risk of dropping out from school, experiencing sleep disorders, abject tiredness, and difficulties building a normal relationship with friends and adults. Their school is often disrupted and prone to regressive behaviours inattentiveness (Cutuli et al. 2020). The vulnerability of a young homeless person due to poverty is associated with educational impairment and has lesser chances of finishing high school than those without this condition. The effects are that they will not secure a stable job, and performance in position may be poor. They will constantly have to deal with financial difficulties, lower annual income, and increase the risk of becoming roofless.

Additionally, limitations in education and training affect accessibility to human capital and access to resources to advancement in life. Due to the latter mentioned aspect, assistance in accessing gainful employment and adaptability in ordinary life. Homeless people are not just sitting and not

looking for work; more often, an individual does but face the stereotype of not wanting to work and being lazy. Even if they do find work, they may have difficulty maintaining the job because they lack support to access housing (Barile et al., 2018). When young people are faced with many obstacles due to their circumstances, they become victims of some of the causes of homelessness.

Victimised young homeless adolescents are more likely to be assaulted on the streets than their homed counterparts. Even though some youth leave home prematurely to run away from dysfunctional families, the life they live on the street is not better than their life at home (Moore et al., 2019). Victimisation does end on the streets or at home and in schools across subgroups; they are bullied. They face behavioural and weapon victimisation in the school premises that is supposed to be a place of learning. It is rather unfortunate that those homeless students who disclose their situation at school lack efficient support; they become victims of hostile racial, sexual and situational discrimination, thereby restricting their access to social support and housing (Edwards, 2020).

In the final analysis, the enduring threat caused by homelessness affects individuals and young people and communities. However, as indicated by the above mention examinations, this does not occur in isolation. Individual responsibilities, environmental factors, structural organisation, and the system wherein the young person finds themselves correlate with the causes and consequences of experiencing homelessness at a young age. These consequences include vulnerability to sexual abuse, mental and physical health problems, lack of fixed address, frequent use of drugs, asocial behaviour, victimisation, difficulties in getting better education and employment, psychological effects and labelling as homeless. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the individual, political organisation and the welfare system of the country to look for ways and strategies that may assist young people in exiting homelessness.

2. SOCIAL SERVICES TO YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

2.1 Preventive services

Preventing homelessness is associated with activities, strategies and initiatives that curtail the individual risk of becoming homeless. It also means accessibility to necessary resources and support to alleviate housing, improve integration, promote social inclusion, cohesion, and reduce the risk of the recurrence of homelessness. The pathway into homelessness includes lucid, individual structural and population-based factors and the shortcomings of many public institutions to protect young people from homelessness. This implies that intervention measures should consist of a broad base method targeting structural reforms, the causes of homelessness and the respect of human rights reforms by all involved. Any approach to preventing homelessness will be credible and legitimate only by including young homeless people's needs. The effectiveness and justification of any strategy to end homelessness should be directed based on the client's individual need and not on a one size fit all (Gaetz, & Dej, 2017). In most European countries, prevention measures are integrated into national strategies to address homelessness. In Wales, prevention is well articulated in the Housing Act of 2014, meanwhile in Scotland is incorporated in practice and policy level. Homeless prevention mainly focuses on crisis response and emergency services in Canada and the US. Still, their approach is progressively changing to move people out of homelessness by implementing the housing First strategies. Gaetz & Dej (2017) further indicates that the inconsistency in the definition of homelessness is blocking the way to identifying practical and straightforward prevention, outcomes and strategies. With this challenge at hand, it becomes questionable where prevention fits, who to target with the limited resources, and defining the prevention's premises.

The question of ethical dilemmas representing these strategies also struggles with an effort to engage preventive measures practically. Some agencies working in cooperation use data sharing and risk assessment to predict those at risk of becoming homeless and provide assistance to keep them housed. Therefore, effective prevention is measured by its ability to sufficiently determine in advance the causes that lead people into homelessness. The challenges in creating and offering effective preventive strategies to homelessness include its efficiency in stopping persons from becoming homeless specifically (Burt et al. 2007), (Gaetz, 2020). Therefore, to assist young people in quitting homelessness, their specific needs have to be considered because the pathway is different from other age groups. According to FEANTSA (2019), to look for ways to assist young people experiencing homelessness, the following factors need to be considered; young people have lost relationships and homes they were dependent on for wellbeing and economic welfare. Secondly, it

is also essential to believe that to exist, homelessness is not only about to be house. There should be an emphasis on transition to adulthood, social skills development, and independent living.

Briefly, it should be considered that young people are still developing emotionally, physically, psychologically, social and cognitively. Not to forget that some young people do not trust and fear authorities due to their experiences of having been failed by the system. Consideration should also pivot to the idea that some policies systematically have created bias to young people to access social benefits, the regulation of the rental market, the impositions of minimum wages and the accessibility of housing is limited. For the benefit of this thesis, it will be essential to examine prevention and intervention levels that include primary, secondary and tertiary levels of prevention. Also, to further explore types of prevention attributed to homelessness.

2.2 Levels of intervention

According to the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (2021), three levels of intervention are primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Primary intervention is indicative of a structural level initiative that is applicable to everyone to reduce homelessness. These thus include health promotional programmes and campaigns. Homelessness may not be the key aim of primary prevention in the light of a universal prevention strategy. Still, it provides possibilities to reduce inequality like providing affordable housing and reducing poverty that may have caused homelessness. Selective prevention also goes a long way to target specific groups and create measures such as anti-discrimination programs and programmes including low-income people. Indicated preventions go a long way to target disadvantaged people and ensure that they are housed, especially families experiencing violence and mental health. Those at prominent risk of homelessness are the target, including those at risk of eviction; secondary prevention considers the situation at hand. Its options include emergency financial assistance, family mediation, and those families experiencing domestic violence, and so on. On the tertiary level, prevention focuses on ensuring that homelessness does not happen again by providing housing support to maintain stability in housing. These measures do not work in isolation; they have to work simultaneously to get better results. Gaetz, & Dej (2017), developed a comprehensive typology of homeless prevention that included structural, system, early, eviction and housing prevention and housing stability

Table 2 types of prevention

Types of prevention	Some examples
Structural prevention; aim to address structural factors through legislation, policy and investment	Enhance housing stability, enhance inclusion, income security, promote poverty reduction, build more affordable housing, security of occupancy wellness and security
System prevention; force on institutional and system failure that might have increased the risk of homelessness, including policy and procedures	Efficient planning for transitioning, e.g. from foster care, hospital, child protection and correctional services to mainstream society,
Early intervention; includes policies, interventions and practices, target those individuals and families at high risk of becoming homeless, Effective identification and assessment mechanism System navigator support, case management and integrated systems support responses.	Accessibility to health care, education, community services, neutral support to social networks, and local institutions' connections.
Eviction prevention; programs and strategies to avoid eviction and assist those at risk of becoming homeless	Housing support, policy including landlord/tenant, rent controls and supplement, housing education, emergency funds and crisis support.
Housing stability; initiative and support to exit homelessness and never come back.	Housing First programme, Housing First for Youth (HF4Y), retaining housing, support for health and well-being and enhancing social inclusion

Source Gaetz, S & Dej, E. (2017)

From the ways mentioned above and types of prevention and helping young people exist homelessness, it is clear to understand that to assist homeless youth; early intervention is necessary to avoid them falling into the homeless situation. Additionally, prevention has to come from primary, secondary and tertiary levels with the mean focus on the needs of homeless youth homelessness. The following paragraphs thus examine social services provided to young homeless, such as affordable housing, housing first the Finnish model and young offenders and housing.

2.3 Availability of affordable housing

In most European member states, the municipalities or local authorities and Non Governmental organizations (NGOs) are responsible for providing services to homeless persons. In most member states, the local authority is the primary model accountable for facilitating and routing those services. Services for homeless people who need specialized support like services for social and health challenges, local authorities can support this group by tackling the issue of availability of affordable housing. Availability of affordable housing can only be possible when the system is well functioning, general safety net, support service and adequate crisis intervention service FEANTSA on European Consensus Conference on Homelessness (2010). It will be challenging to provide one cut assistance to homeless people due to the variation in the experience, especially the young people. The variation in their needs may include economic and social characteristics that may have been affected by homelessness, worsened by it, or occurred during the homeless experience. The extent to which homeless young people can be helped will also depend on whether they are in a transitional, episodic or at the chronic level of experiencing homelessness. The common denominator for homeless people is that they need affordable, suitable and adequate housing. Otherwise, their support needs will differ. The support needs for transitional homeless people seem to be lower than chronic and episodic homelessness. Homeless people will live long in mainstream society with limited problems when these needs are targeted and dealt with.

2.4 Eliminating homelessness the Finnish model

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) is designed and adapted from the standard housing first model to assist young homeless or those at risk to prevent or exit homelessness quickly, (Gaetz 2019). Close, safe, appropriate and affordable housing is provided. Also, support proper to age gear towards well-being, health engagement in education, employment, life skills and social inclusion is provided. The core principle is a focus on the needs of young people including, immediate access to housing with no precondition, youth choice and self-determination, positive youth development orientation, individualised, client-driven support, social and community integration, Housing First

for Youth (HF4Y) (Housing First Europe Hub 2021). Taking the specific need of the youth into consideration, this project has seen an increase in the participation of young people by 92 per cent in West Lothian Scotland who successfully maintains their occupancy, and 100 per cent remain with the project.

The Finnish first housing model is an exemplar model that describes its characteristic clearly. Also, Finland is the only country in the EU with its homeless population on the decline; this is due to the determination and effort of the state and the NGOs, volunteers and municipalities since 1980 (Housing First Europe Hub 2021). Some of the programs that aim to reduce homelessness in Finland include Finland's National Long-Term Homelessness Reduction Programme PAAVO programmes of 2008-2015 that target to eliminate long-term homelessness. The team in this program constituted formerly homeless people in expert by experience and researchers. Although the main focus was on preventing long-term homelessness, there was the need to expand housing advice services and other preventive services. Due to this, 280 evictions was avoided in the Helsinki area alone during 2012-2013 (Pleace et al. 2015). Researchers from the USA, Sweden, UK, and Finland evaluated the PAAVO programs; the conclusion was that it was a success at the end of 2015 (Pleace, 2017). Even though there were some challenges to attain the objective of this project, it is essential to note that homelessness decreased by 35 per cent during this period. The AUNE 2016-2019 programme to strengthen, prevent homelessness, and avoid recurrence was initiated after the PAAVO 1 and II. AUNE 2016-2019 enhances the prevention of long-term homelessness by creating strategies to increase affordable housing that meets homeless people's needs. About 2500 new housing units that constituted ordinary and supported housing units were constructed. The program did consider young people, gender migrant homelessness and made the services accessible to those in need. The recent government action on homelessness prevention in Finland 2016-2019 aims to link the housing first principle more extensively and prevent social exclusion. The government programme 2020 aims to halve homelessness in four years, eliminate homelessness, and end homelessness in four years. The actions also include those at risk of becoming homeless, those undergoing mental health rehabilitation, substance abuse, and clients transitioning from institutions to independent living, (Minister of Environment 2016). This model was created and submitted to the Finland minister of housing in 2007 by four experts with 'Name on the Door'. The central ideology was to provide housing first to individuals before changing their lives around and not the other way round.

The housing first philosophy has been widely adopted in the EU members' states to reduce homelessness. It does require that housing enable independent living. Having home peace is

essential in the housing first philosophy, and accessibility to housing acquisition should go without hurdles. Braciszewski et al. (2016) state that, Stability in the housing provides a base for young homeless person development. They conducted longitudinal research with 243 homeless adolescents for over seven years. Many of them returned to stable housing faster than expected with long-term security, although the early homeless experience had a negative effect on future housing. Parpouchi et al. (2021) also indicated that some Housing First clients still struggle with mental illness while trying not to lose their homes. Therefore is a correlation between long-term homelessness among young people and adverse adjustment related consequences in adulthood. Hence mental health issues and substance use are critical factors that are considered in the implementation of the housing first principles.

The second most important concept in housing is the respect of choice; this is in line with human rights and client autonomy. Also, clients have the right to choose from various types of treatment. For example, those clients who do not want to give up using intoxicants completely cannot be forced; instead, an alternative will be sort to reduce its use and the psychiatric symptoms caused by the intoxicants, to allow the client to live peacefully in their home. The Finland model might be an excellent example in the EU; in other countries like Ireland, young people experience challenges accessing housing in the housing market. Mayock & Parker (2020) examine 40 young people aged 16-24 years in a biographical and longitudinal research to understand the barriers they encounter in the housing market as they attempt to exit homelessness. The results were that young homeless are affected by the housing market forces and the inability to exit homelessness and maintain autonomy and control over their housing future. Therefore housing first the Finnish way is an essential strategy in the reduction of homelessness, especially among young people.

Thirdly, building trust and creating an atmosphere of commonality through rehabilitation and empowerment. The staff gives up their position of power in order to facilitate dialogue and interaction towards strengthening the ability of the homeless to empower themselves on their terms. Positive feedback on a minor achievement is essential to boost the client's self-esteem through the recovery process. Although staff may provide all professional services needed to stay housed, Kidd et al. (2016), the cross-sectional qualitative investigation indicated that living the street to housing is not as accessible to all young people in the same magnitude. Street culture, trauma, addiction, unemployment, discrimination and breaking away from the friends they have created while homeless might be drawbacks to an initiative to exit. These variables may predict how long a young homeless may stay house or get back on the street. Also, those young people who left home involuntary might be easily housed than those experiencing mental health issues.

As well, people experiencing homeless get assistance in making their homes habitable. The resident feels involved in organizing their own life and feels connected to the mainstream society as a whole. A positive social network is encouraged, especially with their families. With this strategy, about four out of five people stay longer in their apartments. It is much cheaper to contract and renovate houses as part of the housing first plan than to leave people without a home. With the Finnish housing model initiative first, the state has managed to cut down financial expenditure by spending less than fifteen thousand Euros less per year per homeless person (Y-Foundation 2017). More still, young offenders are not forgotten in these strategies to eliminate homelessness. The cost of crime to society is significant; homelessness may increase the risk of offending or reoffending; Heidi Lind (2018) suggested that services geared toward those experiencing criminal sanctions are essential to reducing homelessness, especially young offenders. An estimated 30-35 per cent of prisoners have been released, and 10-15 per cent of those serving community sanctions do not have a home. Individual planning is essential because of the complexity of the need for criminal services before, during and after the sanction. The AUNE programme 2016-2019 initiative also included the assistance of released prisoners and those serving community sanctions in providing housing, life management and independent living. Even though housing first the Finnish model may seem to have reduced homeless, there are still some shortcomings and priorities to the housing policy. For example, the Finnish housing system is biased towards owner-occupied housing, and about seventy per cent of apartments fall under this category. Therefore, this policy lacks affordable rental apartments, especially in the Helsinki capital area. The shortage of cheap rental apartments impacts asylum seekers and immigrants and puts them in a vulnerable position of poverty and homelessness (Kangas & Kalliomaa-Puha 2019).

In the end, young homeless people's unique circumstances and stories determined the orientation of the services needed. The needs of the young homeless person have to be considered when in the initial intervention process. All levels of intervention are necessary to strategise measures and provide services to young homeless people. In many instances, faster service is required to break the vicious cycle of youth homelessness. Therefore it is essential to identify those young people at risk of becoming homeless and tackle their situation before they become homeless. Providing services to young homeless regales of their situation, including those released from prison, is like the Finnish housing first model is the better way to undertake youth homelessness.

3. THE EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL WORKERS WORKING WITH YOUNG HOMELESS PEOPLE

3.1 Methodology

A qualitative research strategy is used in this thesis to explore the phenomenon of youth homelessness from the social worker's point of view. A qualitative research method allows us to understand aspects of human experience and uncover factors that lead to specific outcomes. Qualitative research enables us to make sense of reality and explain and describe social world views. It also allows us to understand what, where and when of decision making (Padgett 2016). According to Rahman (2017), the advantage of the qualitative research method in this thesis is that it provides ample detail description of social worker experiences, feelings, opinions, and meaning is interpreted. This design also shows the relationship between the results processing and performing and understanding human experience in a particular setting. Since social workers deal with complex human issues and social problems, they can tackle compelling and overwhelming challenges related to youth homelessness. This provides the researcher with the opportunity to understand different voices, meanings, and events; it is flexible and allows the researcher to interact with the participants. The limitation to this method is that it may occur more on meanings and experiences because it seeks to understand participants and interpret their experiences. The inclusion criteria for participants in this study are those social workers working with young people, youth or under-age that are homeless or might face homeless and work in a city in Finland. This thesis intends not to make statistical references but to listen to the opinion and experiences of social workers who work with young homeless people. Therefore, the participant's experiences can only be collected by listening to them tell their story from their perspective. Hence the participants are chosen based on the above mention characteristic. This choice is because most social workers are generalists and only work with homeless young people. The participants were generally contacted through their organisation, and the follow-up remainder was made through personal email and telephone. **Participants,** a non-probability sampling method is the best option for this sampling procedure because the sample can be controlled for specific characteristics (Taherdoost 2016). Although bias cannot be avoided, the validity of the research outcomes will be generalised only to the particular cases and not to the whole population. Still, it can be used as a benchmark in other projects. Non-probability sampling is often coupled with qualitative research. The focus is on smaller samples; it is not intended for statistical references but to examine real-life phenomena. The selection of participants or cases does not need to be representative or random, but apparent inclusion characteristic is necessary. Therefore the sampling for this thesis was quota sampling, where 5

social workers were chosen based on a predetermined characteristic such as place of work, department of work and qualification. The length of time the social workers have worked with homeless people was not the central point in choosing the participants; therefore, the participants work experiences range from eight months to fifteen years. According to Boddy (2016), fewer sample sizes can be used to gather data for qualitative research and can represent a picture of the whole population. Also, the quota sampling procedure allows easy access to the sampling population and only those who fit the latter criteria were chosen as a sample (Kumar 2011). A non-probability sampling includes quota, snowball, convenience and purposive sampling. On the other hand, probability sampling is when every item has a chance of being included; this procedure has greater freedom from bias. However, it is expensive and time-consuming, given the level of sampling error. Probability sampling includes simple random, systematic, stratified, cluster and multi-stage sampling. **Data collection method** A semi-structured one-to-one interview was used to collect data on social work experience with homeless young people. This method gives the possibility to vary the questions and draw the respondents into the content of the research topic more fully. It also allows for the inclusion of both open-ended questions and questions directed by the systemic theory, the fundamental theory used in this research. Additionally, the interview guided questions is closely grounded in social work, connected to the aim of the research questions and fully explore an in-depth social work experience with homeless youth (Galletta & Cross 2013). The semi-structured interview questions explore the following topics; the concept of homelessness, causes and consequences of youth homelessness, and peculiarity of working with young homeless persons. The semi-structured interview with the open-ended structured interview was prepared in advance and translated into Finnish.

Table 3 *characteristics of semi-structured questions*

	THEME	QUESTIONS
A	Understanding homelessness	1;2;3
B	The phenomenon of youth homelessness	1,2,3,4,5,6,
C	Peculiarities of social work with young homeless	1,2,3,4,5,6,

The interview questions were sent in advance to the participant in English and Finnish. On the day of the individual interview, the questions were asked in English. The participant chose to answer in

Finnish or English, depending on how they felt comfortable. The interview was audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder to facilitate transcription by copying the responses into word process documents verbatim. The interview lasted 20-40 minutes, depending on the participants' knowledge of the questions and responses. The interview was transcribed and checked for error; only relevant social workers experiences with homeless young people were deducted and analysed. **Data analysis** A content analysis is used to analyse data in this research. Content analysis can be seen as a means of collecting, reading and analysing research work already produced that exists in some concrete form. It may be a text, symbol, and image. Reading and analysing the data may not necessarily be from the perspective of the author but directed towards the purpose of the research (Mihailescu 2019). The main reason is to describe the division of coded data into categories and concepts to infer the essence of the content (Kumar, 2011).Therefore, the main focus of this thesis was on interpreting and understanding the communication content of the data collected using s semi-structured questions. Content analysis cannot be complete if it is not objective. The research has to be reliable and systematic. In qualitative research, content analysis is often used with other techniques to back up the reliability (Giles 2002). The advantage of content analysis is that it makes it possible for the researcher to draw conclusions based on the material at hand. Repeatability can also be possible because if it is clearly and carefully written, it will be easy for any other research to go through the same procedure and come up with the same results. More still, it makes it possible to draw a valid conclusion about the relation between the research data and its content and context. Even though it can be time-consuming, involve some level of subjectivity and focus on words and phrases in isolation, it is still the best method to use in this thesis. **Ethical issues**, collecting information from participants requires that the researcher seek consent and maintain confidentiality. According to the Helsinki Declaration that was last amended in 2013, confidentiality and consent are vital in collecting information from a participant in research. Therefore the ethical principles on research with human participants according to the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK have been read and understood and will be used as guidelines (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK 2020). Therefore, a consent form was prepared and sent to the participant beforehand. The content of the document included the purpose of the study, the procedure of the interview, assurance of confidentiality and protection from human harm, voluntary participation, benefit to study participants, how the information will be used and how it will be discarded. According to Kumar (2011), it will be naive for a researcher to think that participants will be willing to give information without knowing how it will be used. Participation in this research will be voluntary. Participants have the right to refuse from answering

questions, not participate, or quit anytime they feel they don't want to continue. **Limitations** This study's limitation arises from the fact that the study is carried out in a non-English speaking country. It was challenging to find participants working with young homeless youth in the age group limits of this study. Most participants were not confident to answer the questions in English. Most of the participants answered in the Finnish language, making it difficult to probe questions, and data collection transcription might have been affected. Also, recent literature directly concerned with the peculiarity of social work with young people experiencing homelessness was hard to find. Additionally, rich material in social work on this topic in English was challenging to find in the research context. Therefore, collecting material in one language and translating it into English, some vital information might have been lost. More still transcribing the data collected in the Finnish language into English was very challenging because the meaning might change when the researcher's first language is not the former. The data collection instrument had to be written twice, one in English and then translated into the Finnish language; thereby, information may have been distorted.

3.2 Findings

It is essential to clarify social workers' activities in relation to homelessness and youth homelessness in Finland. Service provision for people experiencing homelessness in Finland is cooperation between the central go movement, NGOs, municipalities, and voluntary organisations. The government of Finland is responsible for all social policies, including housing policies, to fight against homelessness; The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) implements housing policies and grants subsidies for housing construction. Meanwhile, the Social Insurance Institution (KELA) pays out all minimum transfers. The Finnish municipality is responsible for the overall well-being of the residents (Kangas et al., 2019). Therefore, social work activities are under the umbrella of each municipality. Social workers implement the Act on housing section 20,21,22,23, which focuses on housing for individuals to support living conditions (The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health; social Welfare Act 710/1982). Therefore the actions of social workers are supported by the social welfare act. The provision of this Act helps as guidelines in implementing services available in each municipality for the fight against homelessness. Section 18 emphasises the role of social work in providing services, including guidance, counselling and investigation of social problems, the promotion of security, and the empowerment of individuals' ability to cope with their situation. Therefore, the following section will describe the experiences of social workers as concerns what homelessness means, contributing factors and the peculiarity of

working with young homeless persons in a city in Finland by answering the following research questions:

3.2.1 The concept of homelessness social worker perspective

The semi-structured interview was prepared so that the first group of questions were intended to describe homelessness from the social workers perspective. After the data was collected and analysed, it was chopped into various parts. In this first part, two categories with ten subcategories were identified. 1) a person without a fixed home (no official registered address, does not have own apartment, live with family or friends, wandering from place to place, total misery, uncertainty); 2) features of youth homelessness (denial, coming from other services, have trust issue, lack of proper education) (Picture 1).
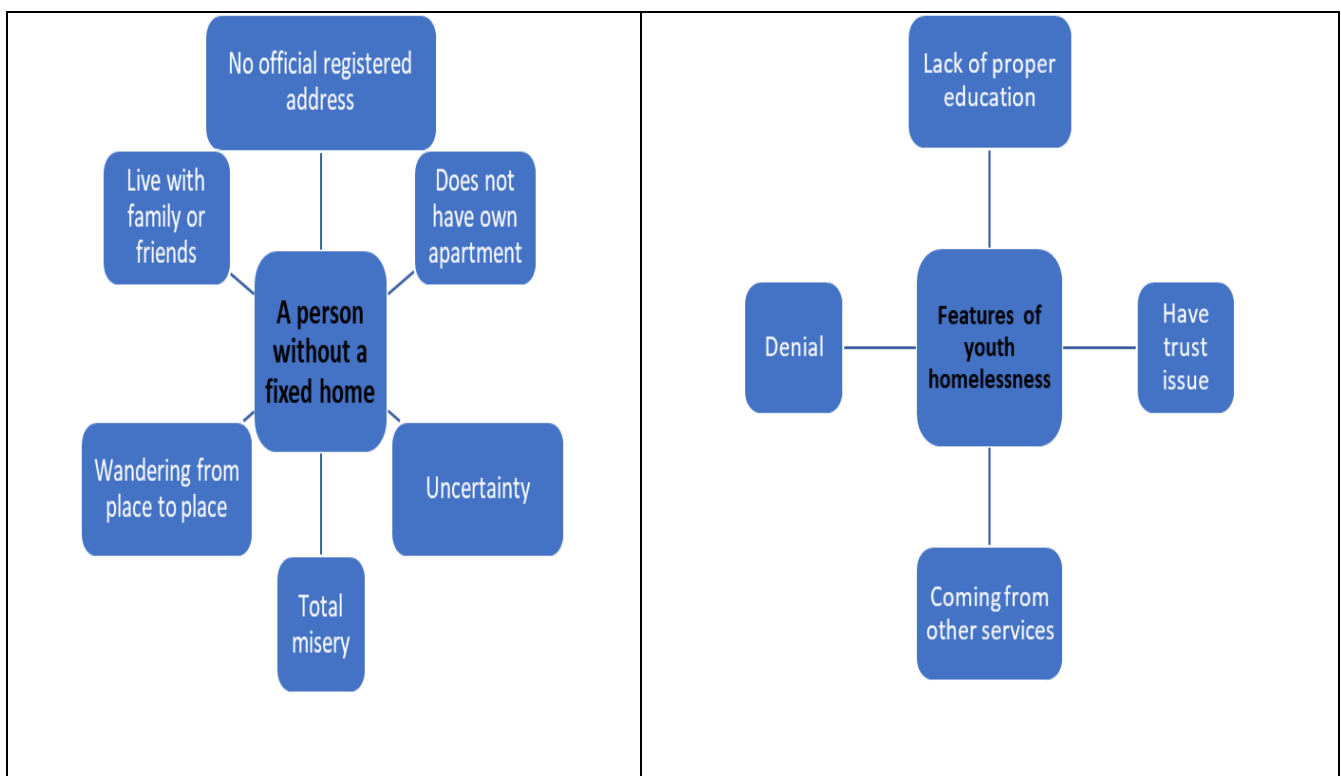
Picture 1 Understanding homelessness

Analysis of the data shows that social workers describe what it means to be homeless as someone who has no official registered address, does not own an apartment and live with family or friends as indicated in the following statements; *"...a place where they are on official register [PAUSE]"* (2), *"Well, Homelessness means that a person doesn't have their home"* (5). *"... Doesn't have their own apartment, which they could call it home..."* (1), *"The person either lives at a friend's house or a*

family member's house (2)." Furthermore, someone who does not stay in one place moves from place to place and either spends a night or two in a friend or family member's house. These individuals live a day to day life, it is always uncertain where they are going to spend the next, so they do not have normal life those who have their apartment this can be a great deal of misery as some social workers describe it; *"It is the person that could stay 2 days in a friend and another 2 days in another place, and then there are no more places to go and then go on a tour in another person place"(3) "...It could be that they have a regular place to live at their place but are still homeless..."* (5). *"Homelessness is total misery, which leads to a vicious circle of social exclusion and discrimination. A home is a person primary right. The right to their own [Stutters] apartment if that isn't present then the risk to social exclusion and discrimination grows exponentially"* (2). *"That why it is a vicious circle as being homeless makes the other issues even worse."* (3). *"Being homeless generally doesn't have just one aspect to it. So, it's like a cluster of issues, starting from the basic issues relating to their past, recreational drug usage and abuse and so on and forth and other social and health problems. That is why it is a vicious circle as being homeless makes the other issues even worse."(1).* from these descriptions, it could be said the homelessness' is not only a lack of own apartment but rather the association of other factors that aggravate the opportunity for an individual to live a normal life and participate fully in their social environment. In order to understand homelessness, it is also important to identify features of youth homelessness, which is the objective of this thesis. According to the social workers, most young people are in a situation where they do not fully accept their situation's reality, so they are full of denial. Some do not understand the intensity of the problem, especially those using drugs since it is mainly their first time becoming homeless. According to the social workers, *"That many young people may deny that they have a problem and could belittle the severity of the situation"(4)*

"Recreational drug usage hasn't fully shown its bad side, and they think it is funny." (3) *"Being homeless could be a foreign and new thing to them"* (1). Another characteristic of youth homelessness is that most of the young people have had an experience with child protective services and extensive history with authorities which lead to a trust issue. According to Heino (2020), the boundary between child protective services and other services is blurring, teenagers and young people do challenge the system thereby creating a confusing role and task of who is to do what, practitioners' skills and legal norms. The social workers pointed out in the following statement, *"...those who have had experiences with child protective service case background are over-represented in our area"(5) ... no statistics, however, to pick up from and every case is not the same"* (1). *"Some of the youth has had a very long and extensive history with*

33

authorities".(4). "They have all sorts of prejudice; they could have bad experiences or have an anti-authority attitude in general. Or if they have been a client of Child Protective Services, they would have bad taste in their mouth which creates a sense of distrust in them" (3). The social workers also indicated that some of the young people who are experiencing homelessness lack proper education as they do not have a report card, *"Many don't even have an elementary school report card which is an extremely bad thing it adds to the already difficult situation..."(4).* The above mention features thus show that understanding homelessness; many different aspects need to the taken into consideration, including the differences in homelessness in terms of age groups and gender as indicated in sub (Picture 2)

Differences in terms of age groups

- Affect all age groups
- Youth are first time homeless
- History of homelessness
- Health problems
- Empowerment
- Other groups

Homelessness and gender

- Invisibility of women's homelessness
- Gambling, drugs, debts
- Bad rental credit men/women
- Finnish men are less likely to ask for help
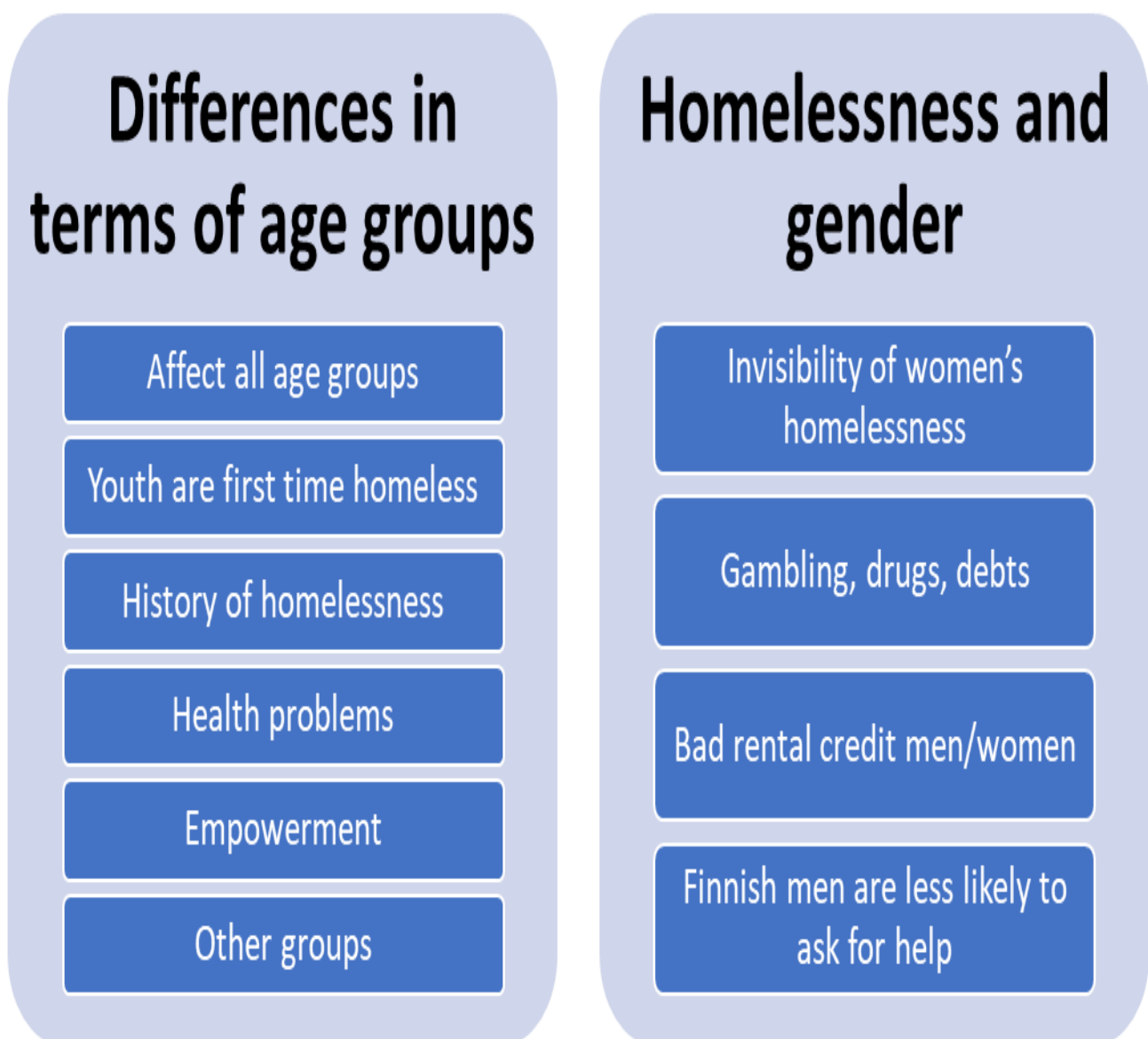
Picture 2 Peculiarities of homelessness age and gender

The analysis of the content of data in the second part, two main categories and ten subcategories were acknowledged 1) differences in terms of age groups (affect all age groups, youth are first time homeless, history of homelessness, health problems, empowerment, other groups) 2) Homelessness and gender (invisibility of women's homelessness, gambling, drugs, debts, bad rental credit men, women, Finnish men are less likely to ask for help). Analysis of the data thus indicated that social workers acknowledge that there are some differences in homelessness when considering young people. Even though homelessness is prominent amongst all age groups, the workers indicated that because of the cumbersome nature of young people's life, homelessness is concentrated among 18-29 years, as some of the participants said, *"If I can throw estimation, there can be hidden homelessness in the youth [LONG PAUSE]..." (3)"... I think that the problem isn't so concentrated on the youth, especially those from the ages of 18-29.older age groups are more affected because their life is cumbersome" (2).* Most of the participants explain that homelessness amongst young people might be a first time and a chaotic experience of not having a house as expressed in the following statements, *"Mostly .... [SIGH] if a young individual is homeless, could be the first time they lose an apartment."(2) I will say that they have better opportunities, to get out of homelessness"(4)" it could be a chaotic, crisis-like situation why the youth has become homeless" (1).* As concern the other age groups, they might have lost their apartment much time than the young people, *"When people become homeless, there is usually a history of the person becoming homeless, it could be that the individual has lost multiple apartments in the past." (5).* Amongst the older homeless people, the health problem is more prevalent as compared to the younger people of whom some have addiction and drug misused problems as reinforced by the social worker, *"with the older generation, there are more health-related problems as compared to young people who are mostly associated with addiction, and drugs issues"(3).* Older homeless people may have some other sources of income like retirement aid and unemployment benefit compared to young people who are first-time homeless. *"...Usually older people, those around 40 generally have another type of livelihood and safety nets such as a retirement aid, sick pension or even unemployment money" (1).* The social workers also indicate that they use different approaches depending on whether their client is young or older, *"With youth, it is a process of lifting them to the point of life where they can manage on their own, a position which they probably have never had before. With older people, it is the case of helping them back to the position before homelessness" (2).* In terms of gender and homelessness, the social workers articulated that men homelessness is more visible than, in the case of women, it might be that they are in a relationship and live with their partner or have the possibility to exchange their body for a place to sleep, thus making them invisible in the homeless

statistic population, *"Men and women could have different problems. I don't know what the statistics are but homelessness amongst women is less visible than men." (3) "... Women may have boyfriends and or be in relationships which take advantage and or abuse them and use sex in exchange for a place to stay*" (1). Another social worker observes that both genders may be similar in many ways. Still, when it comes to money management, men fall into more debt and gambling than women, *"... In my own career time, I have encountered more homeless men. The main differentiating factor has been gambling, falling into debt, and narcotics usage. I would say both of the genders are quite prominent; however, men clearly fall into, at least with my experience fall into more sensitive situations which leads them to fall into homelessness*" (5). Additionally, gambling and debt lead to bad rental credit and the possibility of getting a rental apartment is reduced as expressed in the following statement, "I don't know they are quite identical the reasons for *becoming homeless. I haven't seen any specific huge differences when looking at their gender. The reasons are usually lack of proper payment of rent and disturbances and lack of care of the home. Which is present in both genders" (1).*Besides, the workers point out that Finnish men are less likely to ask for help. Thereby they keep their problems to themselves and may not likely report their homeless situation and seek help from the authorities, as expressed in the following statement, *"Maybe men in Finland have this culture of not speaking and sweeping things under the carpet. That could be something which may affect to the situations pilling up and cumulating compared to women..." (3).* However the circumstances of a homeless young person might be, there are some reasons of why they become homeless and the consequences of becoming homeless the next picture investigate the causes and consequences of youth homelessness in (Picture 3)

3.2.2 Causes and consequences of youth homelessness

Furthermore, after analysing data related to the phenomenon of youth homelessness, it was categorised into two main categories and 20 subcategories. 1) causes of youth homelessness (drug misused, money illiteracy, eviction, irresponsible attitude and behaviour, lack of home management skills, antisocial behaviour, struggling with honesty commitment), 2) consequences of youth homelessness (unstable life, Inability to control of one's life, difficulties getting proper education and employment, lack of knowledge of the network of services, bad rental credit, safety issues, abusive relationships, trust issues increase possibility of committing a crime, social isolation, discrimination, increase the use of social services).

Causes of youth homelessness

- Drug misused
- Money illiteracy
- Eviction
- Commitment
- Irresponsible attitude and behaviour
- Lack of home management ability
- Antisocial behaviour
- Struggle with honesty

Consequences of youth homelessness

- Unstable life
- Inability to control one's life
- Lack of knowledge of the network of services
- Bad rental credit
- Safety issues
- Abusive relationships
- Trust issues
- Increase possibility of committing a crime
- Social isolation
- Discrimination / Difficulty to get a home
- Increase use of social services

Picture 3 Cause and consequences of youth homelessness

There are many reasons why a young person might experience homelessness; most of the participants in this research explain that eviction is the trigger that put the young person into the reality of being homeless, *" ... of course other aspects related to the young individuals manners may lead to the young individual to being evicted from their house"(5)*. As examine by the social workers, the reasons of eviction from their apartment are many, some might result for the fact that the misuse drugs *"...In working with young people i have noticed that most that become homeless at a young age increases with the usage of narcotics specifically drug issues, like inhalants, cannabis, marijuana and many..."(2)*. In order to buy drugs they need money. Money for rents may be misdirected to buying drugs, gambling and eventually they fall into severe debt and rental debt as indicated in these statements, *"...There is also gambling debt, where the debt can easily start adding up..."(1)*, *" ...money literacy, so how the money is to be used at home, as a young person is mostly lacking in most of my clients"(4)* *" falling into debt and unpaid rent that may lead to homelessness"(3)*. Also irresponsible behaviour and attitude from the participants perspective is a trigger that leads to a young person becoming homeless, *"...a general lack of control over one's life and that the person generally may have an irresponsibility attitude, that requires that the person should pay for rent, make sure it gets paid for in time and apply for the benefits which they have the right to from the social insurance institution... does the required studying or are they going to work or applying for unemployment fund." (3)*. *"When the young person cannot sustain themselves and their habits cannot support their own wellbeing. And show to the neighbours that they are orderly, that there aren't making too many loud sounds, that there aren't huge groups of people coming over and drinking and doing drugs, I would say that those are the main issues that will make a young person homeless" (4)*. Home management is an integral part of decision making in keeping a home for a longer time. It is the ability to use the minimum resources available to get what you want (Rani 2016). *"...In a sense making sure the day-to-day requirements are taken care of. We talk about living etiquettes, meaning taking into consideration the Neighbours and making sure the apartment is clean, knows how to cook food and just, in general, the basic necessity"(1)*. The provided quotation illustrates that young people who do not have these skills will eventually lose their apartments. Interview data also shows that commitment to the services they receive is vital in keeping their apartment. When a young person is not able to dedicate themselves to these services, they might eventually become without a home: *"Commitment... commitment to the services provided by the assisted apartments, young homeless people tend to cause some problems. When they have gotten an apartment then they say "thanks for the apartment", and they don't commit to the services or any further counselling or any form aid which will help them to deal with the issues*

such as the usage of recreational drugs which caused them to become homeless in the first place, Commitment is far weaker in most of the youth" (2). As a result, there are many repercussions when a young person becomes homeless, as substantiated in the following paragraph.

The repercussion of youth homelessness' brings despair to the youth in the form of life instability. The recklessness of a young person discourages those with a stable life to associate with them: *"...With the young age comes a sense of impulsiveness and such. Which brings its challenges; such as the young person life may not be very stable..." (1) "... unfortunately those people with a stable life wouldn't like to take someone with an unstable life to stay with them" (4).* The inability to control self due to the use of drugs, from the participant's point of view this result in isolation due to the loss of their apartment: *"... I have noticed amongst my clients that suffer from the use of recreational drug misuse and lack of control of one's life can cause that the person to fall into homelessness and isolation from the main society" (5).* Living in isolation due to homelessness may limit the possibility to connect to the network of available services that can help in exiting homelessness, from the social workers perspective: *" they don't know the network of services available, they don't know what services they can get from social insurance institution"(2).* It becomes challenging to get a proper education and employment when homeless: *"...I think that if you are homeless, it makes it harder to apply and to get a place to study in or to even go to work; to build a life with routine without a house is extremely difficult" (3).* The provided interview data illustrate that to get a job, employees have to have and address a level of education that will help them strive in their careers. Being evicted from many apartments due to bad rental credit limits the possibility of having another apartment, as illustrated by the participants: *"...Well one of the challenges is that those without credit won't be granted an apartment regardless of the source or what has caused it" (3).* There is an increased risk of getting involved with crime and safety concerns when a young person becomes homeless, as indicated by the social workers in the following way: *And of course, the lack of safety which is made more prominent when you don't have your own home.*" (4). *"... Lack of safety, an increase of exclusion from general society, thus leading towards the road of crime... I would say there is a greater chance when compared to, [LONG PAUSE] those who have their own home; When an individual is in a difficult and closed position the temptation to commit a crime may be greater" (4).* Trust issues becomes a concern when young people becomes homeless, got cut up in crimes involving many different authorities ads pointed out by the participants: *"Probably the biggest challenge is that they don't trust the authorities. [LONG PAUSE]...If the individual has committed juvenile crimes, meaning that the*

interactions with authorities have been negative, they will always think that they might be controlled; however, we are just here to help to get the life right on track and to some."(2) These statements indicate that it becomes and problem to get the young homeless person to involve in services and activities that are geared to help their homeless situation. Also, young homeless people may have the prejudice of associating with the mainstream society thinking that they do not belong and thus also avoid seeking help: *" they are at an increased risk of social isolating themselves from the mainstream society because they think they are not like other people, especially when they don't know how to seek for help..., I would say with the discrimination, exclusion and all other factors are closely related and go hand in hand with one another when you are homeless"(1).* According to the social workers, the situation of the young homeless person is disheartening since they are having other challenging issues and seeking a home from place to place: *"They are horrible; the discrimination risk rises tremendously and uncontrollable... It is disheartening and shocking to be homeless and apply for a home with all types of conditions from one place to another. No matter what it takes, It is it isn't good at all."(2).* With the challenges of acquiring a home, it becomes tempting to seek a relationship with benefit which may lead them into abusive relationships: *" young homeless person in search of an intimate relationship, they sometimes find themselves in a very abusive relationship, could be due to drugs use and other mental health condition*" (5). Decrease trust and low level of commitment, drug misused and mental health problem may prolong the intervention process thereby leading to increase the use of social services: *"...of course the increased usage of society's resources, it becomes more expensive on the society that someone becomes homeless; The individual will most likely depend on the society and the amenities and services provided by the society" (3).* Stenius-Ayoade (2020) suggests that homeless young people are a high-risk group due to their poor health condition as they use hospital and emergency services a lot.

In summary, the above indications show that youth homelessness is a complex issue interwoven in many aspects, such as not having a home of their own, living with friends and family, wandering from place to place, it a life full of misery and uncertainty. Also, denial, experiences with authorities having trust issues, and lack of proper education are associated factors that need to be considered when considering youth homelessness. A young person becoming homeless has its cause that includes but is not limited to drug misuse, money illiteracy, eviction, lack of home management, antisocial behaviour, commitment and irresponsible attitude and behaviour. These causes of youth homelessness have ramifications on the individual, including an unstable life, inability to control one's life, difficulties getting a proper education and employment, lack of

knowledge of services available, a bad rental credit, safety issues, may get involved into abusive relationships—also, safety issues increases and the possibility of getting caught up in crime. As a result, they turn not to trust authorities, social isolation discrimination, and the increased use of social services and resources.

3.2.3 Providing services to young homeless people

This section of the semi-structured interview highlighted how young homeless people could be helped; the data analysed came up with two categories and five subcategories. 1) Faster services (timing, preventive services, breaking the vicious circle). 2) The system (child protective services, availability of services for young people). (Picture 4)
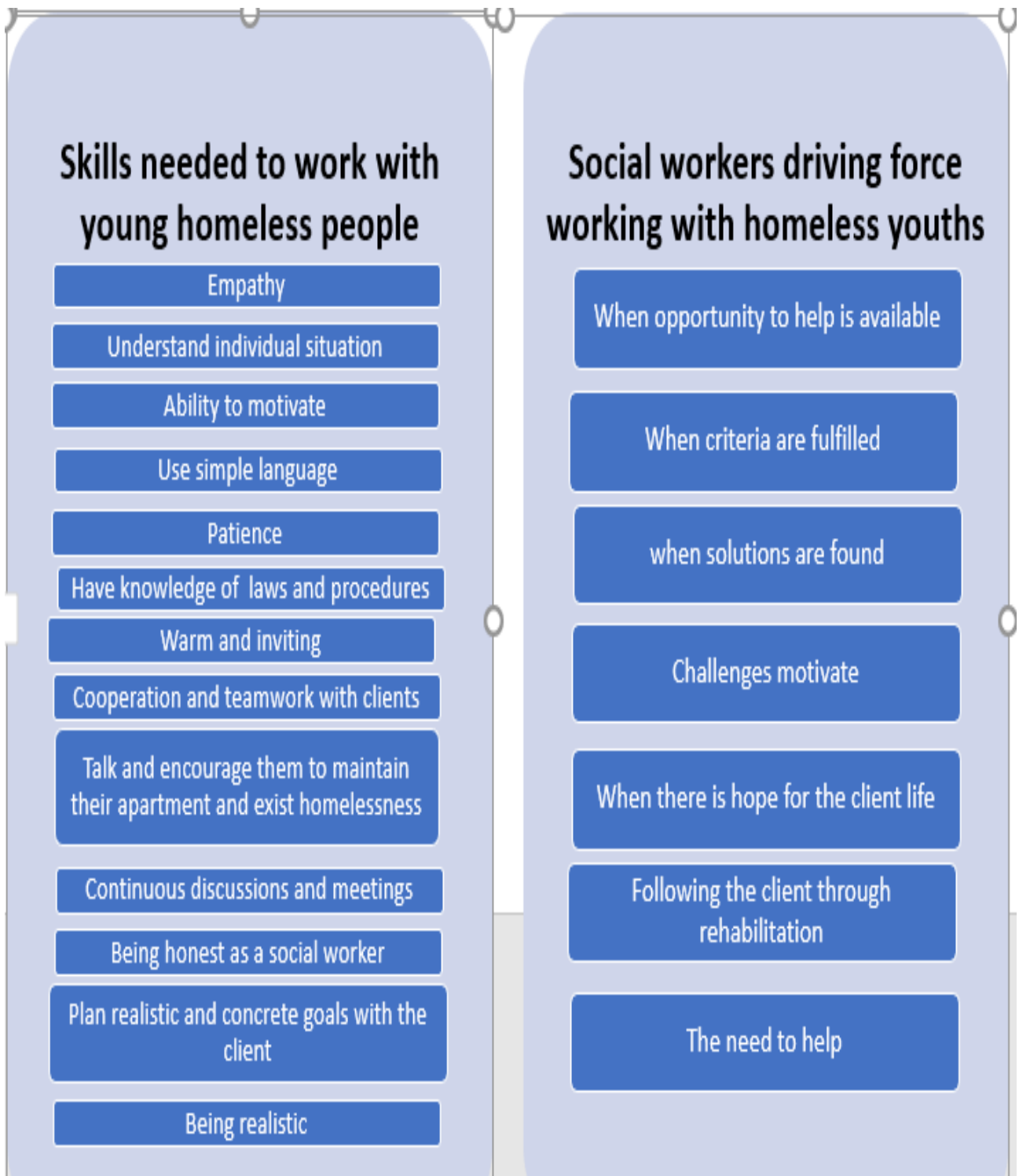
Faster services

Timing

Preventive services

Breaking the vicious circle

The system

Child protective services

Availability of services for young people
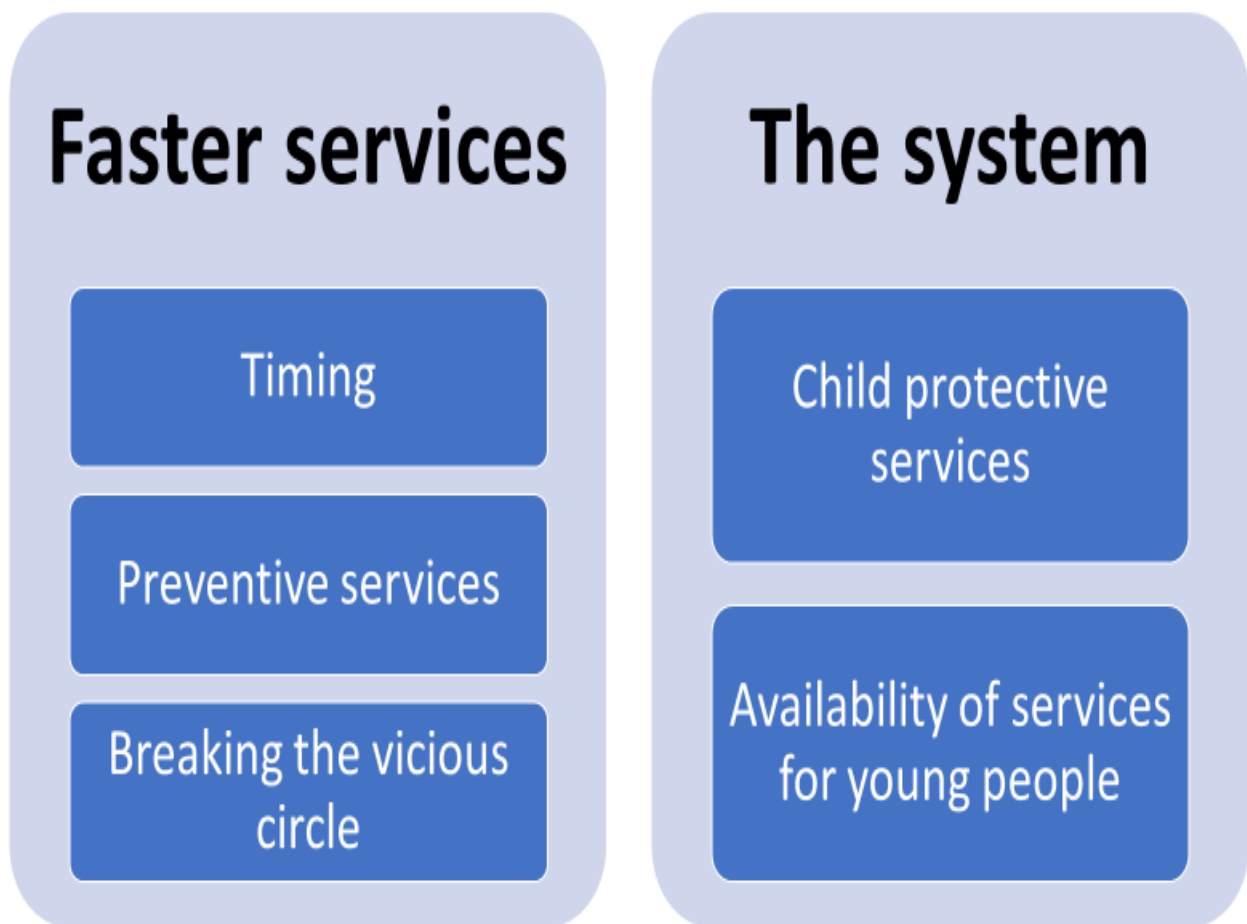
Picture 4 service provision and young homeless people

The structure of the society determines social work with people experiencing homelessness in Finland. It is focused on making the services system work for the benefit of the clients. Therefore the system also has to act for the benefit of its citizens. Berg (2020), research on youth homelessness, well-being, and considering social workers' role in the prevention process indicated that social workers work as intermediaries in connecting clients with social services, including projects that seek to eliminate homelessness and meet their needs. For example, social workers connect clients with landlords and other public and private services that meet the demand of their care plan, including services like housing, rehabilitation centres, and employment services. According to the social workers, *"Young people, in general, have quite good services here in Finland on offer. It may be even better than those given to adults but on the other hand most of the homeless services are provided regardless of the age." (1).* Also " *...Better preventive services tend to be provided to the youth, from another point of view young people generally have better services provided to them to prevent homelessness, it is more unlikely for them to go homeless" (2)." they are night shelters for the homeless to sleep in..." (3)*The given quotations demonstrate that social workers recognise the fact that young homeless people do have good service and preventive even though it is vital to intervene in an appropriate time frame in order to break the vicious circle; *"That why we need to intervene the vicious homeless circle and stop the problems which are behind it. If we talk about someone who has had 10years of homelessness in the past, it makes it much harder to intervene into the situation because the person has become very much accustomed to being homeless..."(3).* Therefore from the participants perspective timing is an important denominator to take into consideration when providing services to young people experiencing homelessness as indicated; " *From my perspective…, I think the faster we intervene the less difficult it could become for the client" (3).* However in providing services to young homeless people the participants observe that: *"It is a governmental issue; it is the number one issue...We unfortunately have this phenomenon where there are inherited bad habits, and it is a horrible thing. We trying our best to cut this horrible vicious circle, child protective services or the encounter with them, being exposed to recreational drug use/ intoxicant, social discrimination and inadequate education are all activities that may increase the risk of a young person becoming homeless"(2)*, therefore the cooperation and clarity of the roles and skills of every sector of the social service concerning the young people is a concern that need to be consider so that service provision can be facilitate.

To sum up, in Finland, there is an availability of services for young homeless people; the emphasis on faster service, which will enable the prevention and breaking of the vicious circle of youth homelessness, is an essential factor to consider when thinking of service provision.

3.2.4 Experiences of social workers working with young homeless people

This group of semi-structured interview questions aimed to determine what experiences social workers working with young people who are homeless. Three categories and 27 subcategories were established. 1) Skills needed to work with young homeless people (empathy, understand the individual situation, ability to motivate the client, use simple language, patience, have knowledge of laws and procedures, be warm and inviting, cooperation and teamwork with the client, talk and encourage them to maintain their apartment and exist homelessness, continuous discussions and meetings, being honest as a social worker, plan, realistic and concrete goals with the client, be realistic. 2) Working with young homeless people is (help those in the weakest position, it is assisting with getting a roof over their head first, helping financial issues, tackling the root cause of homelessness, it means early identification and intervention, when interventions succeed, empowering young people to take control of their life. 3) social workers driving force working with homeless youths (when the opportunity to help is available when criteria are fulfilled when solutions are found, challenges motivates, when there is hope in client life, following the client through rehabilitation, the need to help). (Picture 5) on the next page

Skills needed to work with young homeless people

- Empathy
- Understand individual situation
- Ability to motivate
- Use simple language
- Patience
- Have knowledge of laws and procedures
- Warm and inviting
- Cooperation and teamwork with clients
- Talk and encourage them to maintain their apartment and exist homelessness
- Continuous discussions and meetings
- Being honest as a social worker
- Plan realistic and concrete goals with the client
- Being realistic

Social workers driving force working with homeless youths

- When opportunity to help is available
- When criteria are fulfilled
- when solutions are found
- Challenges motivate
- When there is hope for the client life
- Following the client through rehabilitation
- The need to help

Picture 5 Distinctive characteristics of social workers working with young homeless people

The content of the above data analysed thus indicated that social workers need to have specific skills to work successfully with homeless young people. Empathy is essential to understand people from a different perspective. It is the essence of the worker putting themselves into the client's situation from the participants' point of view, *"...In my own opinion a social worker should be able*

*to express a sense of empathy and look at the situation from the perspective of the young individua*l...” (1). “*... So real empathy is required and a lively interest to the young person situation”(4).* Having a more comprehensive outlook and understanding the individual situation from the participant point of view does reflect the skill that is needed to work with young people experiencing homelessness: “*Understand the cause-and-effect relationship as to why the young individual has ended up homeless. Why have they ended up in this situation” (3)*. Understanding the phenomenon of youth homelessness allows the social worker to motivate and give hope to the young homeless individual to acquire and keep an apartment: *“A social worker should also maybe.... in some way through conversation or dialogue to motivate the individual and give them hope that an apartment can be found and also be kept and that the apartment it is really important in a person's life.”(5).* The social workers do acknowledge that using simple language to the understanding of the young homeless client and respect to make the client open up and facilitate communication as indicated in the following statement: “: *Well... Social worker must come to the level of the young individual and speak and use language which the young person would fully understand...” (3) “... If you present yourself as a controlling bureaucratic person and use formal language, it may alienate the youth from the social worker”(5).* Patience is imperative, and knowledge of laws and procedures associated with rooflessness and youth homeless are skills that workers consider to be essential: *And also, patience is very important...”(4), “Of course, these aids needed by young homeless people provided by the social insurance institution need to be clear and known by the social worker so that they know what do in each situation”(2).* Being warm and inviting and getting the young homeless person to involve in ma encourage and facilitate the intervention process as illustrated in the following statements: “*Not To be cold and clinical and instead be warm and inviting regardless of the youth's situation” (1) “Many times, we take steps back and sometimes nothing happens but when you get the young person to understand their situation and that we are on the same side and I am not the enemy but their helper” (2).* Continuous discussions and meetings, talk and encouragement for the young person to maintain and keep their apartment and exit homelessness reflect the views of the participants; “*A lot of the time it requires more than one meeting; there may be many meetings, where the main purpose is to lead to the realization of the situation.”(5); “I strive to give a motivational approach while talking with a client So that the young person can accept the aide being offered. Many believe that when an apartment has been gotten, everything is ok; however, this isn't the case in actuality.”*(2). Being honest as a social worker and laying the situation in a way the young homeless person will understand, “By talking, talking, and talking, again and again and we come back to the topic as to
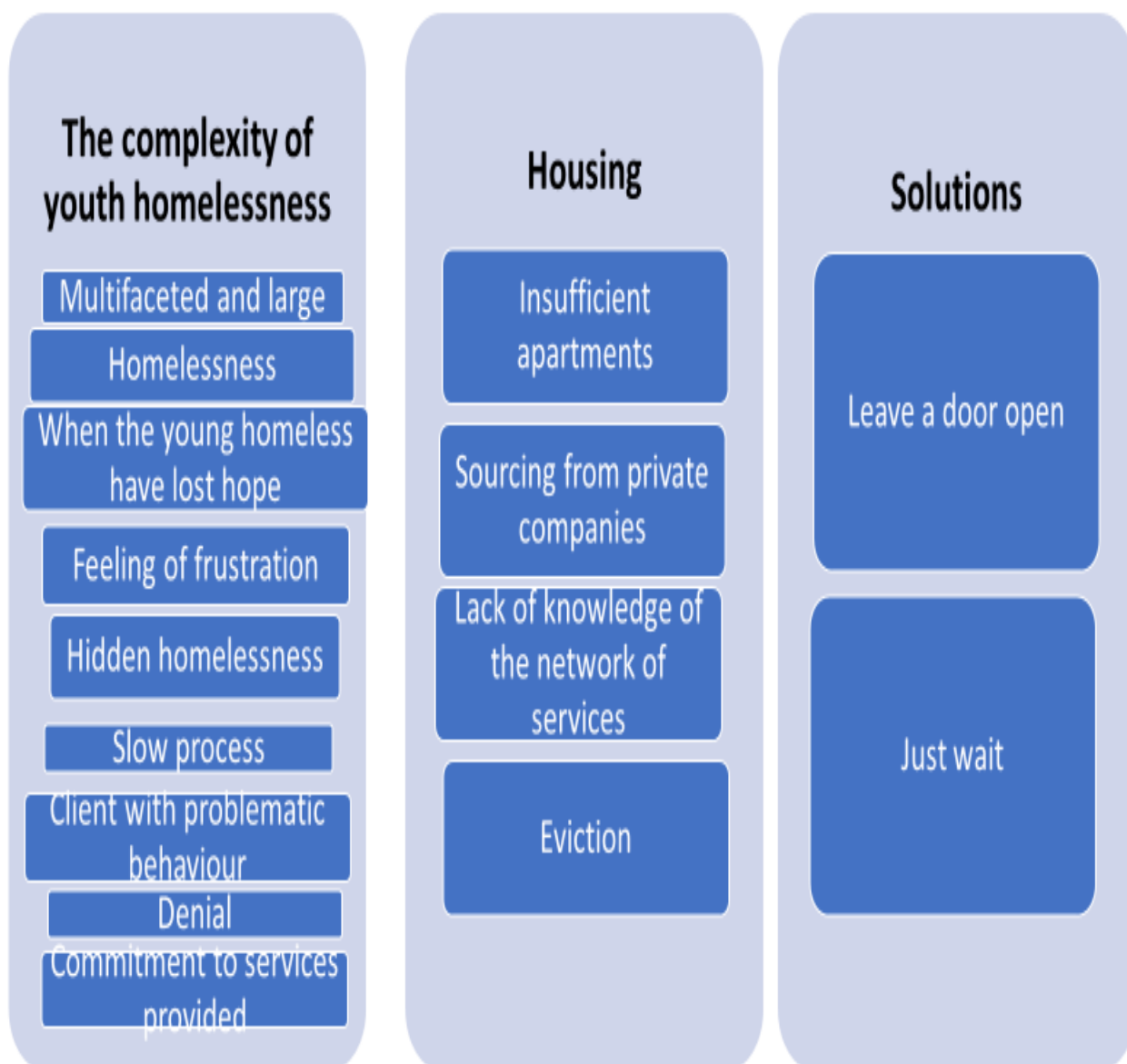
why you should take care of yourself, and you should get some help... Just like anything else, honesty is the keyword. If a person denies that they have an issue with recreational drugs usage, it makes it extra difficult to discuss and find solutions..." (3). This given statement shows that social workers try to be open with the reality of the homeless situation with the young person and plan realistic concrete goals together; *A person can only be motivated when they can admit they have an issue and want to find a solution..." (4)"... The way I encourage them is to ask what type of situation will they end up, what type of emotions rise when talking about the matter when there is not a place that can be called home or the other issues related to what type of dreams and wants someone has for their life"(1); "I sit with my client, and then we make a plan together, I make sure the goals are pleasant, perfect sized and very concrete while looking at the current situation as realistic as possible" (3).*

Most of the participants said that when the opportunity to help is available, it keeps them going; *"... When there are opportunities to make arrangements to help the person to a home is available, and accessible" (5).* When the latter aspect is fulfilled, and the client meets the criteria, it is a motivating factor: ". *The opportunity to make arrangements for the person to get a home if they fulfil our criteria..." (3).* This implies that even though everyone has the right to have a house when the client those not meet the criteria, it becomes a problem but when all they meet the criteria is met, and solutions are found, it is a motivating factor for the social worker to continue their work; *"It is not easy, but it is very satisfying to find a solution to the situation. At the end of the day, it is a very pressing and monumentally large issue, so the result of the work is concretely motivating"* (1). Not all difficulties discourage social workers working with homeless young people some participants say that some challenges act as a motivating factor to do their work; *"...And I get a lot of motivation from even the smallest steps taken forward with them. With others, we go faster and easier together forward, and with some, it is far more challenging and tedious with them, the challenge motivates a lot" (2).* The social workers feel that they need to help one motivating factor, also when following the client through rehabilitation and observing the progression of the young person to get out from the problem situation is motivating as illustrated in the following statement: *"…And I get a lot of motivation from even the smallest steps taken forward with them. We go faster and easier together forward with others, and with some, it is far more challenging and tedious. The challenge motivates a lot" (2), "...it is very inspiring and motivating to follow clients on the road to rehabilitation out of homelessness" (5).* Progression to the right direction gives hope for the client and so the social work; *"There is a possibility that the person may have an actual change in their life and the person could truly rebuild their life. And they can get a status for themselves through getting a place to*

study or a job. And they can provide for themselves. And for me, that the most rewarding for me" *(4).* From the above mention point, it could be assumed that working with homeless youth people requires a lot of dedication and motivation. Even the most minor step ahead to assisting the young person exit homelessness is a motivating factor for the social workers working with young people experiencing homelessness. Despite these positive factors, there are some challenges of social working with young homeless people as illustrated by the participants as the examples in table 7 indicate.

3.2.5 Challenges, solutions, and suggestions to facilitate exit from homelessness

To understand how peculiar it is working with young people experiencing homelessness, a section of the semi-structured interview questions highlighted the challenges social workers encounter in the helping process. 7 main categories and 26 subcategories were identified. 1) Complexity of youth homelessness (Multifaceted and large, Homelessness, When the young homeless have lost hope, Feeling of frustration, Hidden homelessness, Slow process, Client with problematic behaviour, Denial, Commitment to services provided. 2) Housing (Insufficient apartments, sourcing from private companies, Eviction. 3) Health problems (When mental health issue is involved, Relapse is a big problem. 4) Solutions (leave a door open, Just wait) as indicated in the next page.

The complexity of youth homelessness

- Multifaceted and large
- Homelessness
- When the young homeless have lost hope
- Feeling of frustration
- Hidden homelessness
- Slow process
- Client with problematic behaviour
- Denial
- Commitment to services provided

Housing

- Insufficient apartments
- Sourcing from private companies
- Lack of knowledge of the network of services
- Eviction

Solutions

- Leave a door open
- Just wait

Picture 6 complexity of youth homelessness

Suggestions for improvement 5) Housing (Easy access to service apartments, personalized service apartments, Availability of more service apartments. 6) Early intervention (Early dictation, Easy contact) 7) Services (Cooperation with young homeless, More collaboration with other services, Increase Low threshold services, Reduce waiting time), as shown in picture 7

Housing

- Easy access to service apartments
- Personalized service apartments
- Availability of more service apartments

Early intervention

- Early dictation
- Easy contact

Services

- Cooperation with young homeless
- More collaboration with other services
- Increase Low threshold services
- Reduce waiting time
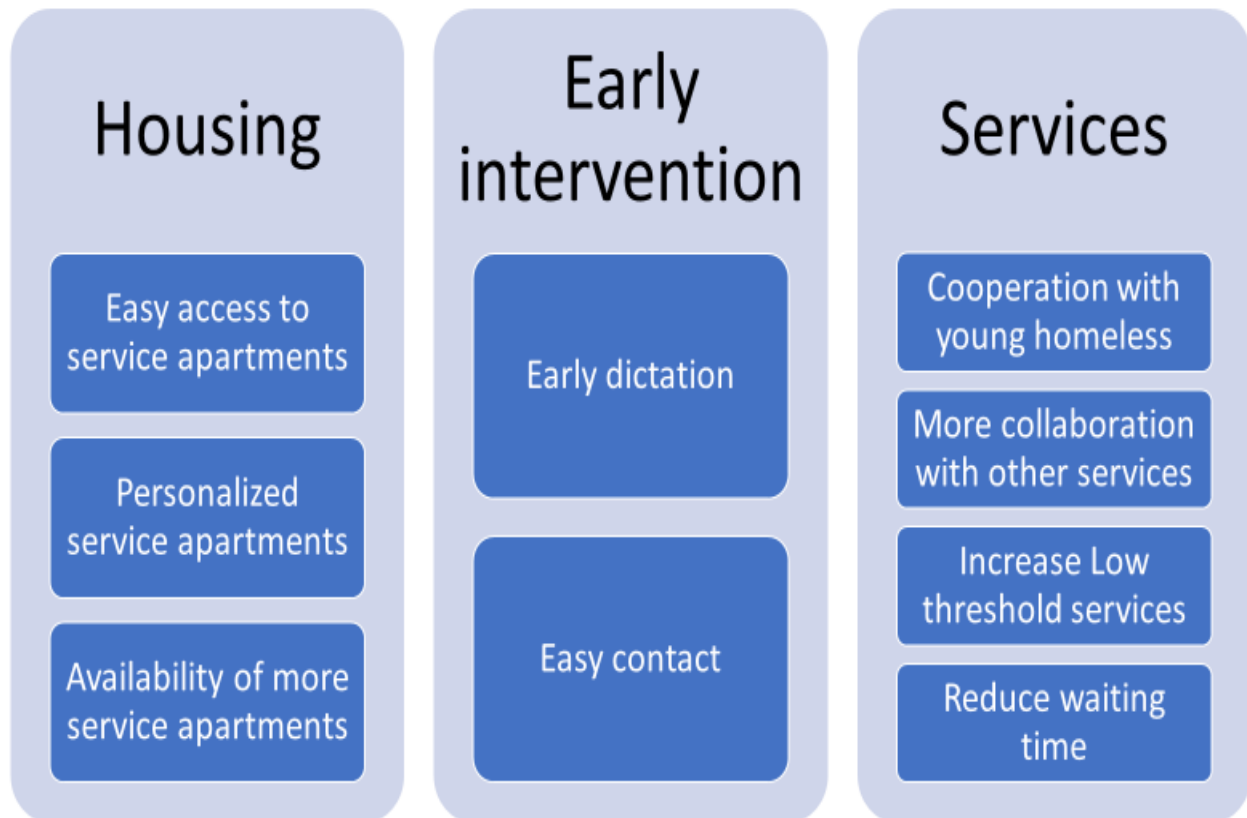
Picture 7 Suggestions for improvement

Social workers working with young homeless individuals encounter challenges daily while at the same time struggling to follow procedures and regulations. These practical and emotional difficulties are combined by the fact that youth homelessness is not only about housing, but it also is multifaceted large and complex: "*Challenging. It is very challenging because their problem is very complex and large.".... (3)" It isn't just the homelessness; there is usually some sort of narcotic issue, especially drug usage and inadequate level of education, no profession, no job, and no job experience, So specifically, the people who have their livelihood in danger; It is very challenging" (1)*. Losing an apartment and not knowing where to spend the next for a young person for the young. A situation like this put the social worker in a position wherein they are pressured to find solutions to the problem as quickly as possible to get the young person out form the bad situation, as indicated by the following statement; "*It is difficult when the young person becomes homeless, meaning that the situation has already gotten out of hand and they are in a really bad position" (5), "...There is also a lot of feeling of frustration as the social worker can only offer the help and the client decides whether or not they want it."(5).* Complexity also arises when the client is young and has lost hope in ameliorating his homeless situation; it becomes challenging to

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motivate them, and the intervention process becomes slow and requires multiple meetings and conversations to get the young homeless person onboard: *"... another challenge is motivating the young person. It also requires the young person to take an active role in bettering the situation, because they often lose hope which makes it hard for them to be motivated to better the situation"(4), "Other challenges are that it could be a slow process and require multiple conversations and meetings. There needs to be constant contacting with the person to try and get the person to acknowledge their problem."(4).* Pleace (2017) indicated that in 2016 about 82 per cent of hidden homeless persons in Finland were those living with family and friends; therefore, this poses a challenge, and progression is not always constant. The participants also articulate this aspect: *"It can take many years before it even comes to mind that they are homeless" (2) "...They may live here and there in their friends and family homes, and to them, it may be an adventure and also fun experience"(4).* Challenges also arise when the young person in a homeless situation continues to carry on as if nothing is happening. Some are difficult to contact, or they just act as if they have the problem under control and the only thing they need for the social system is an apartment. They downplay the other cause that led them into homelessness: *"The client acts as if he is above the problems in addition with using recreational drugs. The client gives the impression as if he just wanted an apartment, and in cases like this, when there is a lack of belief in the problem, denial of the problems. It makes it really hard..."* (5), *"...a young man who was very hard to contact and fully denied their problem and their attitude towards the whole situation...pause... to say he was arrogant would be an overstatement. Still, he had this mentality that he knew what he was doing and had everything in control..."(3).* Even though they may be array possibilities for young homeless people in Finland, getting the client to commit to the services provided may be a problem: *"...to get the young person to commit to the services provided. That is it is self a huge issue" (3).* This in itself is a challenge for social workers who work with young people experiencing homelessness.

Young people experiencing homelessness may fill all the criteria in acquiring an apartment, accept the situation, and commit to the services provided. Still, when there is an insufficiency of available apartments, it becomes a problem: *"Social work services in itself doesn't have apartments to provide and or to give to those who have become homeless..." (4) "...If there are problems with living in general, there are different aids available, such as aid to help find an apartment." (5).* The scarcity of affordable apartments owned by the municipalities forces the services to source from private companies that come with a price tag: *"Well, getting an apartment is very difficult, in this city for example, because there is a shortage of small apartments, so we need to use purchasing*

services which is of course very expensive. And those purchasing services come with some kind of package, such as cleaners, daily visits by professionals and also other basic necessities the person requires to be rehabilitated"... (2). The social workers need to get a roof over the head of young homeless people before engaging in a solution to the other problems associated with why they become homeless. However, it makes it harder to get an apartment when the client has bad rental credit and have been evicted from their house: *"...It only gets harder when they have already gotten an eviction..."* (2) *"... The big problem is that the client has already gotten evicted from many places; the walls against them have been raised so high that the client cannot even get housing from the municipal housing estate program. That is a problem which is very hard to find a solution"* (4) *"... At the end of the day, the landlord decides who becomes a tenant. If the client is not motivated or interested in getting help, then it makes the situation even harder"... (3).* Due to health problems, some young people may not be fully aware of their situation's gravity. Sometimes the health or mental health problem may not be visible, making it challenging to understand the behaviour: *"....Some mental health issues may cause the client to not understand what is going on. Meaning that the client will receive different housing help"...(1).* Even when the situation of the young person has been identified, and they accept to engage in a rehabilitation program, relapse is a big problem when there was the hope of recovering: *".... For example, the youth has gone through rehab and chosen to make better decision and get their life back on the correct path but then relapses again"(2).* This implies that the process has to start again, making it a challenge to comprehend.

The social workers acknowledge that not all of the problems of the young homeless person can be resolved. However, they try their best to solve the situation with the resources at their disposal. Therefore they propose two simple solutions, just wait and leave the door open, which allow the young person to come back anytime when they are ready: *"Nothing else can be done other than let the client come to the realization that they need help in other words social workers have just to wait"* (1), *"Maybe it is essential that they leave a door open to accepting; The young person should feel as they can come back and ask for help when they are ready"* (3).

In spite of all these challenges, the participants still believe that there is room for improvement that may facilitate their activities and reduce young people's homelessness—for example, housing, early intervention and adjustments in services. The participants articulated that an easy ace to service apartments where there is the availability of daily support is essential: *"I would suggest making It easier for apartments to be gotten specifically getting those service apartments. Where there is daily support..."* (2). Secondly, the apartment should be personalised and situated in a supportive environment, for example, all-in-one, which will act as a starting point to exit homelessness: *"...*

smaller more personalized scale. That would be best for the young person who will work as a springboard towards a better life as they will be in a supervised and well-supported environment. They would have their own apartment and get personalized help directly there" (5). Thirdly the participants suggested that if they have access to the available apartment at their disposal, it will it may reduce some of the challenges they encounter in servicing young homeless people: *I would like for the social worker to have more opportunities to help, that is hope availability of more services apartment at my disposal that I can offer to homeless people in need*" (5). Equally important, identifying those young people who are at risk of becoming homeless before they become homeless could be a possible solution to avoid homelessness: "*Well... I would wish that if there are any possibilities that before becoming homeless there would be an announcement or notification channel that can intervene before they become homeless; because things are far easier to fix when there is still in an apartment.*"(3). Also the need to make it easier for young people to be able to contact social workers: "*... we need easily accessible ways for homeless to contact us social workers" (4).* Besides, the participant suggested that cooperation with the young people experiencing homelessness can be facilitated if they have more tools because it thus impacts the whole situation: *"Of course, I would wish that I would have more ways to help... more tools to give to the client...*

In many cases the youth's participation in the situation has a massive impact as to how things are done" (2). As well more collaboration with other services will enhance more personalized services of the young person's situation: *"more collaboration with employment services, drug rehabilitation services, so that they can find a good program that is tailor to young homeless people with varying needs"(2).* In addition, low threshold services should be increase so that young homeless people can quickly understand where to ask for help: "*...people come from very different backgrounds and require very different services and approaches. And tend to find themselves in social insurance institutions from multiple places. So we require more low threshold services..."* (4). As well, a reduction in waiting time: "*I would want that there aren't long queues to booking an appointment. Thinking from the perspective of a young person applying for help is already very hard, but on top of that wait, a long time may prove too difficult*" (3).

On the whole, participants pointed out the complexity of social work with young people experiencing homelessness and some factors that hamper their work like frustration, slow process and the multiple faces of homelessness, housing insufficiency, the invisibility of the health and mental health of young people experiencing homelessness. Even though they indicated some suggestions to reduce homelessness, such as housing solutions, early intervention and improvement

in service collaboration, they provide some simple solutions in the face of adversity like leaving the door open and just waiting.

DISCUSSION

Social workers in Finland also use the (National Association of social work 2021) code of ethics and policies as a guide to practice in addressing issues concerning housing insecurity and homelessness, especially in areas related to privacy, dignity and worth of the client and the use of technology, especially in this time of covid19. They understand the complexity of the cause and consequences of homelessness across the client system. Thus seek and match available resources to the needs of the individual clients. Social workers empower the client to use services associated with the homeless situation. Assessment is made on many levels in a different domain relevant to homelessness and housing. They assess the client at the individual and family level, focus on challenges, strengths and capacity to obtain and maintain housing. They work intensively with an individual accumulate appropriate support networks resources available in the municipality to assist the client. Social work does not end when these networks are created, but support is available and continuity until the client is integrated into mainstream society. For example, social work encourages clients to stay in contact with service associates with substance abuse management, support enrolment in education, and strengthen mental health. They also assist young people experiencing homelessness to enrol in training courses on housing that focuses on maintaining one's house and resident's obligation (Kangas; & Kalliomaa-Puha 2019). The social worker does support people experiencing homeless to cope with everyday life. They connect them to housing support services, financial assistance, prevent social exclusion and promote inclusion. They also respond to support caused by alcohol or drug abuse, mental health problems or illness and disabilities or ageing. Additionally assists individuals with a support need relating to physical, psychological, social, cognitive functional capacity; and support family and friends of people experiencing homelessness. By law, every client is entitled to have a social worker. The worker's role is to prepare a service assessment immediately when they meet with the client for the first time. This assessment plan is completed in undue delay, and urgent services are organised immediately for the client. Under the Finnish social welfare Act of 1982, social services are guaranteed to its citizens. Structural barriers are some of the contribution factors that perpetuate the worker's activities in the helping process. Structural barriers are a set of procedures that informally create challenges in processes and make it impossible to do things that rights could have easily accomplished. Structural barriers can be seen in aspects like accessibility to housing, healthcare, lack of resources, staff turnover, all types of discrimination, the welfare system, disparity in income level and poor infrastructure (Wahab et al. 2020). The bureaucratic scheme also directs the actions of the social

worker to focus on the documents, and therefore see the law and formal measure as the only perspective that determines the decision-making process and stay within the formal boundaries and seek to provide services only at the lowest cost to not go against institutional principles (Tzadiki, & Weiss-Gal, 2020). Therefore, social work practice is equal to social fulfilment of rules and intervention processes become ineffective while the cause and consequences of homelessness are not fully considered. Agencies and institutions need continuous funding for their activities; to do this, they have to abide by these rules, although some social workers in Netherland, Germany, and Belgium do not see this as an obligation to be accountable to the government, according to a research carried out by Tier et al. (2021), on the accountability between social worker and the government. Some of the challenging aspects of working with homeless young people may include but are not limited to caseload, paperwork safety, working conditions, lack of training working with involuntary clients and the salaries. Caseload is the number of clients that a single social worker has to deal with. It is the process of organising the cases or clients, so they do not fall into the cracks and not get the services they need. Kim et al. (2019) surveyed 1,244 caseworkers in the US working with public welfare agencies to determine the caseload characteristics and how it affects caseworkers. The findings indicated that caseload influences unmanaged casework and self-reported overtime. Although, the NASW standard for social work caseload 2013 thus emphasises the importance of sustainable workload that requires the worker to do high-quality planning and provisions of services. Still, most social workers deal with unmanaged casework and working overtime. This may lead to burnout and feeling that social workers are not doing well. Parlalis & Christodoulou (2018) suggested that those workers who were unable to complete their work at a given time had to work extra. A case manager must have a wide range of knowledge and skills to assess clients' needs identify stress points and problems in serving clients. Also, a social worker must seek to address life challenges and enhance well-being. The must-have resources, policies, and procedures of various agencies to help clients articulate their needs clearly, identify problems, explore resolutions, strategies, develop a capacity to deal with problems more efficiently, and monitor overall service delivery. Society is continuously changing; youth rooflessness is increasing, and solving homelessness is challenging and complex. Complexity may arise due to the uniqueness of the story of every young person who finds themselves homeless, some of them cannot be tracked, and others disappear in the process of intervention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (2020). Social work intervention does not only centre on housing; therefore, creating a cobweb of a challenging process for social work practice intervention and evaluation becomes very slow or never successful.

To tackle life challenges, social workers adhere to the constantly changing environment, legal and educational development, economic mayhem, the trend in population, and theoretically promiscuous, think holistically when applying practice method (Walker 2019). In this case, the social worker aims to link young homeless individuals to needed resources in complex service delivery networks. The worker must have various agencies' resources, policies, and procedures to achieve this. With the various effect caused by homelessness on individuals and society, social work interventions strive to identify strength in people even amid challenges and help them cope with daily life challenges. Social workers consider cultural values and beliefs to avoid biases and accept the client's worldview and conditions and apply social work principles to help alleviate the problem. Therefore the social work seeks to promote social change, be it at the community level, family or small groups of the society. They seek to challenge and change those structural conditions that contribute to marginalisation, social exclusion and social injustice in the micro, mezzo and macro levels. On the other hand, social workers may not be fully equipped with the skill and knowledge to impact diminishing homelessness; they can only use the practice as mentioned above possibilities to connect clients with various services in a given system (Levin, & Sefati, 2018).

There is an emphasis on the importance of empowerment, liberation, and connecting people with the structures to tackle life challenges and improve Global well-being Definition of Social Work (2021). Taking this perspective into the subject matter of this thesis, the objective of social work is to enhance young people well-being by empowerment them to improve their abilities to solve problems. Also, to connect young people with a system that offers indiscriminate accessibility to appropriate services and resources also possibilities to attain maximum potential Kamiński, Tadeusz (2018). Connecting young homeless individuals with the system requires the social worker to put on multiple hats, including enabler, broker, mediator, negotiator, educator advocate, just to name a few. Social workers also have to feel that their influence impacts the reality of the client and their effort. The loyalty of the social worker may often be in the middle of conflicting interests. Conflict may occur between social work activities and actions to protect the people's interest and continuous societal demand for efficiency, utility and limited resources. As Jahan (2016) thus reports in the research Media and Social work, even though the media is there to inform the people social workers serve, sometimes reporting can divert and undermine what social workers can do and how well they provide service, especially to a vulnerable group. Therefore, challenging social work's professionalism can increase the risk of those in need of assistance in society.

Trust is the feeling, belief in integrity and freedom from any suspicions about someone or a system that outcomes will turn out to be positive. Building trust takes time and efficacy to produce intended

results. Social workers have to be honest, competent and benevolent with young people. In some instances, by the time the client reaches the point of help, they might have gone through multiple and ongoing exposures to uncaring from family, friends and services providers; this does not make the job of a social worker easy (Angie et al.. 2010). These events are traumatising to them; as suggested by Kennedy et al. (2010), social work with young people who have experienced traumatic events is challenging. They have multiple specific needs and do not trust services providers. Therefore the mental health of young adults is an essential factor to consider when working with homeless youths. Mental health problems amongst homeless youths are disproportionately high as in most cases; they do not seek help and is left untreated. Martin & Howe (2016) describe the mental health issues of homeless youth as a complex social problem that is under-diagnosed in most cases is left untreated. Some symptoms of mental health may be apparent. Others are hidden and need a clinical social worker to be more knowledgeable and use a keen ability to draw and manage sensitive materials concerning the individual. Again, the rate of unprotected sex and unplanned pregnancy, the inability to access health care services, weakened immune system, sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV and multiple sexual partners are rampant in this population. In some cases, the transition period from foster care system services often ends unexpectedly even though there is a need to continue. Besides, this unpresumptuous stop may be due to funding, eligibility criteria, lack of collaboration across services system and lack of sufficient knowledge about youth to adult development (Osgood et al. 2010).

The validity of these findings is generalized only to the participants of this thesis and not to the general population. While reviewing the literature for this thesis, articles were randomly selected; only those that have to deal with the content of this thesis were chosen. Hence, most articles did not address the significant issue of concept cause, consequences, service provisions for youth homelessness, and social work experiences with homeless youth. The data collected for this study is directly from the social workers working with young homeless people, making it unique and providing direct evidence concerning youth homelessness.

Indeed, if the peculiarity of social workers working with young homeless people is essential, more research is needed to examine this phenomenon. Also, investigate the impact these peculiarities have on the social work with young homeless people, which might help understand the complexity of social work activities with young people experiencing homelessness.

CONCLUSION

1. Youth is a time between childhood and maturity. It is a period of vulnerability; there are conflicting ideas about classifying youth in terms of age in different countries and institutions. This makes it challenging to develop unique statistics of youth homelessness. Youth have their own culture, and social workers need to understand this culture in order to provide suitable social service. Homelessness is not only about housing alone; and it is the deprivation of physical, spiritual and security needs**.** A young person living in an insecure and inadequate housing environment with family members or friends is considered a homeless youth. Homeless young people have distinctive needs to consider when planning service provision. It is challenging in some cases to distinguish between the cause and consequences of youth homelessness. It is a combination of individuals with personal problems vulnerable to the macrostructure. Family conflict, rejection; change in family structure, poverty, eviction living foster care, and other reasons cause homelessness for young people. The consequences of a young person becoming homeless include but are not limited to vulnerability in many aspects, victimisation; susceptibility to drug usage and addiction, increased use of social services, social isolation, poverty, physical and psychological mishaps, unstable education and employment impossibility in the future.

2. Service provision for young homeless people should consider activities and strategies to reduce homelessness. It should be understood that young people are still in their developmental stage. Therefore, structural and system prevention, housing stability eviction and especially early intervention and prevention is critical to consider in the provision of service to young homeless people; because of the variation in their needs. The Finnish hosing first model is an exemplar model wherein formerly homeless persons as an expert are part of the planning of the services. Thus, it requires that a house is provided to the young person no matter their circumstances, and then other issues can follow. Independent living, respect of choice, building trust and recently-released prisoners are also considered. In addition, faster services, breaking the homeless vicious cycle and availability of services for young homeless people need to consider.

3. Social workers need specific skills to work with young homeless youth. These skills thus include empathy, ability to motivate the young people, knowledge of individualism, ability to communicate in simple, understandable language, patience, have knowledge of laws and procedures governing the homeless sector, ability to liaise with other services, being realistic and the ability to include the young homeless person in the planning. Even though they may have these skills, working with

young homeless people is complex, multifaceted and extensive. Workers have to deal with young people, who have lost hope, are in denial, have commitment issues. They also have to deal with insufficient housing, sourcing from private companies, relapse, frustration, and clients with mental health issues. Personalised services apartment, easy access to service provision, easy contact, an increase in low-threshold services; improvement in the cooperation with other services, early dictation and reduction in waiting are some of the best possible solutions to facilitate the work of social workers working with young homeless people. Hence, social workers in Finland work with people experiencing homelessness varied depending on the individual's situation. They work in offices, visit clients on the field, and ensure that services are easily accessible; they cooperate with clients experiencing homelessness. They also advocate for clients, develop rehabilitation programs and work in housing services. Social workers understand that building rapport is essential for effective engagement with clients whose unique homelessness experiences require a personalised approach. Furthermore, they work to dismantle oppressive systems to promote housing security and well-being for their clients. It is also vital that social workers participate in continuous professional education, formulate a question that addresses the knowledge gap and educate the population, especially policymakers, about homelessness and service needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To policymakers and municipalities involved with youth homelessness

It is recommended to provide more tools to social workers working with homeless young people, increase personalised service apartments for youths, improve the services for early identification of youth homelessness, reduce waiting time, and encourage inter-service collaboration.

More rigorous methods should be implemented to reduce drugs. But, more importantly, home management should be taught from primary schools until high school as the main subject. This is because home management skills are required in every aspect of everyday living.

ABSTRACT

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Homelessness is a concern for policymakers and society as a whole. However, youth homelessness is a more significant concern for individuals experiencing it. Social work with young homeless people requires understanding the concept, causes and consequences of homelessness, adequate skills, and the ability to use a holistic approach to tackle the problems.

The purpose of this thesis was to highlight the experiences of social workers working with young homeless people, analyse the cause concept and consequences of youth homelessness, and identify ways to provide social assistance to young homeless people.

A qualitative research method was used in this thesis to examine the phenomenon of youth homelessness. Five social workers working with young homeless people from a city in Finland participated in this research. Data were collected with semi-structured interview questions. The semi-structured interview data were analysed manually in categories and subcategories using the content analysis method.

The findings indicated that social work with young homeless people is complex and extensive. Becoming homeless at a young age may be a chaotic situation; many are in denial of the reality of the problem. Homelessness is understood differently from different countries. There is a shortage of affordable personalised housing for young homeless people. Social workers lack sufficient tools to provide adequate services to young homeless people; early identification is vital. Hidden homelessness is a challenge; there is the need to low threshold services to young people who are at risk to become homeless. Health and mental health undiagnosed is a problem; collaboration with other services is also a problem. It will be beneficial to enhance services provided to young people experiencing homelessness to reduce homelessness among young people and facilitate the activities of social workers. It is recommended to give more tools to social workers working with homeless young people.

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APPENDIX

1. Instrument for data collection in English

TOPIC: PECULIARITIES OF SOCIAL WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The research goal is to disclose the peculiarities of social work with young homeless people.

The object of the study: Social work with young homeless people

The objective of the study:

1. To analyse the concept, causes and consequences of youth homelessness

2. To identify ways of providing social assistance to homeless people at a theoretical level

3. To highlight the experiences of social workers working with young homeless people

Participants: SOCIAL WORKERS/ SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

You MAY answer in English or Finnish language

Q.A, UNDERSTANDING OF HOMELESSNESS

1) How would you describe homelessness?

2) How would you describe your experience working with homeless people in general?

3) How does working with young homeless people differ from working with homeless people from other age groups? Would you please give examples?

4) What does it look like to provide services to young homeless people?

Q. B, THE PHENOMENON OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

1) What do you think contributes to the risk of becoming homeless at a young age?

2) What are the risk factors of becoming homeless at a young age? Would you mind giving examples?

3) How does homelessness among young people differ from homelessness among other age groups? Could you please give examples?

4) What have you observed in your work as some of the challenges young homeless people face? Would you please give examples?

5) What are the consequences of a young person becoming homeless? Would you please give examples?

6) How would you describe the causes of becoming homeless in terms of gender? Would you please give examples?

Q. C, PECULIARITIES OF SOCIAL WORK WITH YOUNG HOMELESS

1. a) What competencies or skills does a social worker need to work with young homeless people?

1. b) What does social work with young homeless people mean? Would you please give examples?

2. a) What do you like about working with young homeless people? Would you mind giving examples?

2. b) How do you motivate yourself to continue working with homeless young people?

3) How do you motivate young homeless people to accept and participate in rehabilitation activities?

4) What challenges do you encounter working with young homeless people, and how do you overcome them? Would you please give examples?

5) Is there anything specific working with young people experiencing homelessness that you would change to facilitate exit from homelessness? And; Why? Would you please give examples?

6) As a social worker, what would you improve working with young homeless people and why?

2. Instrument for data collection in Finnish

AIHE: KODITTOMUUDESTA KÄRSIVIEN NUORTEN SOSIAALITYÖN ERITYISPIIRTEET

Tutkimuksen tavoite: Tuoda esiin kodittomien nuorten kanssa tehtävän sosiaalityön erityispiirteet

Tutkimuksen kohde: Sosiaalityö kodittomien nuorten kanssa

Tutkimuksen tavoite:

1. Analysoida käsite nuorten asunnottomuudelle, sen syyt ja seuraukset

2. Tunnistaa tapoja tarjota sosiaaliapua asunnottomille teoreettisella tasolla

3. Korostaa kodittomien nuorten parissa työskentelevien sosiaalityöntekijöiden kokemuksia

Osallistujat: SOSIAALINTYÖNTEKIJÄT/Puolijäsennelty haastattelu

VOIT vastata englanniksi tai suomeksi

A. ASUNNOTTOMUUDEN YMMÄRTÄMINEN

1) Miten kuvailisit asunnottomuutta?

2) Miten kuvailisit kokemustasi asunnottomien kanssa työskentelystä yleisesti?

3) Miten työskentely nuorten asunnottomien kanssa eroaa työskentelystä muiden ikäryhmien asunnottomien kanssa? Antaisitko esimerkkejä?

4) Miltä palvelujen tarjoaminen nuorille kodittomille näyttää?

B. NUORISON KODITTOMUUS ILMIÖNÄ

1) Mikä mielestäsi lisää riskiä jäädä asunnottomaksi nuorena?

2) Mitkä ovat nuorena kodittomaksi jäämisen riskitekijät? Antaisitko esimerkkejä?

3) Miten nuorten asunnottomuus eroaa muiden ikäryhmien asunnottomuudesta? Voisitko antaa esimerkkejä?

4) Mitä olet havainnut työssäsi nuorten kodittomien kohtaamista haasteista? Antaisitko esimerkkejä?

5) Mitkä ovat seuraukset siitä, että nuori jää kodittomaksi? Antaisitko esimerkkejä?

6) Miten kuvailisit asunnottomuuden syitä sukupuolen mukaan? Antaisitko esimerkkejä?

C. KODITTOMIEN NUORTEN SOSIAALITYÖN ERITYISPIIRTEITÄ

1. a) Mitä osaamista tai taitoja sosiaalityöntekijä tarvitsee työskennelläkseen nuorten kodittomien kanssa?

1. b) Mitä sosiaalityö nuorten kodittomien kanssa tarkoittaa? Antaisitko esimerkkejä?

2. a) Pidätkö työskentelystä nuorten kodittomien kanssa? Haluaisitko antaa esimerkkejä?

2. b) Miten motivoit itseäsi jatkamaan työtä kodittomien nuorten kanssa?

3) Miten motivoit kodittomia nuoria hyväksymään kuntoutustoiminnan ja osallistumaan siihen?

4) Mitä haasteita kohtaat työskennellessäsi nuorten kodittomien ihmisten kanssa, ja miten voit voittaa ne? Antaisitko esimerkkejä?

5) Onko mitään erityistä asunnottomuutta kokevien nuorten kanssa työskentelyssä, jota muuttaisit helpottaaksesi heidän tilannettaan? Ja; Miksi? Antaisitko esimerkkejä?

6) Mitä parantaisit sosiaalityöntekijänä työssäsi nuorten kodittomien parissa ja miksi?

3 Informed Consent Agreement for Participation in a Research Study

Student	Institution
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You are being asked to participate in a research study under confidentiality terms. Therefore, the ethical principles on research with human participants according to The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK has been read, understood and will be use as guidelines.

This form includes information about the study so that you may make a fully informed decision regarding your participation.

1. **Purpose of the study**: this research study is part of a Master Thesis project within the Master Program "Social Work with Children and Youth", Faculty of Human and Social Studies at Mykolas Romeris University. Its purpose is to investigate the **PECULIARITY OF SOCIAL WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.**

2.

3. **Procedure**: you will participate in 1 semi-structured interview. Modality (face-to-face or online), time, and location will be agreed in advance. Interview questions will be sent to you in advance. You can answer in English or in Finnish language. Interview will be audio recorded.

4. **Assurance of confidentiality**: interviews will be transcribed within two weeks. After transcription, recordings will be deleted. Interview transcripts will not include your name, place of work or the city you work. At all stages of the research, data will be treated with confidentiality, meaning that you can be identified by the investigator only and your name will not be revealed in any context. The data shall not be use for any other purpose than for this thesis. Access to only parts of the interview transcripts may be given to the Master

Thesis supervisor on request or in case advice is sought by the investigator for data analysis purposes.

5. **Voluntary participation**: your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to withdraw at any time. You are free to refuse to answer any question.

6. **Assurance of protection from any harm or distress**: You will be protected from questions which may cause you any harm or distress, or which may be seen as unduly intrusive. Risks or embarrassment associated with participating in the study are not envisaged.

7. **Benefits to study participants**: None

For more information about this research study, please contact:

Vivian Kewoh-Vainio

+358404134290

Vkewoh@yahoo.com.au or vivainio@stud.mruni.eu

Please do answer the questions to the best of your satisfaction.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have been informed about and consent to be a participant in the study described above. You agree that the interview will be audio recorded and that your words will be transcribed and may be used as anonymous quotations in the Master Thesis document.

A signed copy of this informed consent agreement will be kept by the investigator. You are entitled to retain a copy as well.

Study Participant Name _____

Study Participant Signature _____

Date: _____

Investigator Name _____

Investigator Signature _____

Date: _____