# Characteristics of Help-Seeking Street Youth and Non-Street Youth*

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## Abstract

Alma Molino, a graduate student in Clinical Psychology at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, was selected through a competitive process to prepare a paper on her research on runaway and homeless youth. The author used data collected from callers to the National Runaway Switchboard to describe the characteristics and issues facing a large national sample of youth who have run away or are in crisis, and to examine the associations between these issues and status as a street youth (runaway, throwaway or homeless) or non-street youth (considering running away or being in general crisis). The relationship between the type and number of issues and the frequency of running behavior is also assessed.

## Introduction

Research overwhelmingly suggests that runaway, throwaway, and homeless youth are at higher than average risk of experiencing a wide range of deleterious outcomes. These outcomes result from exposure to stress and risk factors both before and after leaving home. Examples of stress and risk factors experienced by runaway, throwaway, and homeless youth prior to leaving home include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; neglect; family conflict; disruptions in home life, including divorce or changes in the family structure; and substance abuse by both the youth and his or her family (Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006; Safyer, Thompson, Maccio, Zittel-Palamara, & Forehand, 2004; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a).

The effects of early negative experiences can be exacerbated by the stressful experience of homelessness (MacLean, Embry & Cauce, 1999). Examples of stress and risk factors experienced by runaway, throwaway, and homeless youth after leaving home include poor nutrition, risk of criminal victimization, lack of supervision by caring and responsible adults, and exposure to sexually transmitted infections

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(Ennett et al., 1999; Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002; Hoyt, Ryan & Cauce, 1999; Rew, Taylor-Seehafer, Thomas, & Yockey, 2001; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a).

Because of the adversity experienced by runaway, throwaway, and homeless young people, there is a great need to develop effective prevention programs for at-risk housed adolescents and their families. Further, there is an equally important need for effective intervention programs to reduce the stress of being without a stable home. Research studies that identify and describe factors associated with street youth status can aid in the development of effective prevention and intervention programs. Other research needs include studies of runaway, throwaway, and homeless youth that utilize large representative samples, samples that include youth from both rural and urban areas, appropriate comparison groups, and assessment of strengths as well as problems of homeless youth (Robertson & Toro, 1999).

The present study addresses these research needs by utilizing data obtained from a large national sample of runaway, throwaway, homeless, and housed adolescents who contacted the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) for assistance with crisis issues. This study aims to:

- provide descriptive demographic data on a large national sample of runaway, throwaway, and homeless youth as well as help-seeking youth who are currently housed,
- provide descriptive data on issues preceding or prompting help-seeking behavior by youth callers to NRS,
- examine the associations between these issues and status as a street youth (i.e., runaway, throwaway, or homeless) or non-street youth (i.e., contemplating running or being in general crisis),
- examine the relationship between the type and number of issues accompanying increases in frequency of running behavior.

To facilitate understanding of the research aims addressed by the current research project, the following section will provide background information on youth homelessness and an overview of pertinent areas of research published since 1998. A general overview of research on youth homelessness published prior to 1998 is provided by Robertson and Toro (1999). For a general review of research on the topic published since 1998, see Toro, Dworsky, and Fowler (2007) in this volume.

# Background

## Definitions of Street Youth

The definitions of runaway, throwaway, and homeless youth used by the National Runaway Switchboard are based on definitions from the first National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children, conducted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (NISMART-1; Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1990), and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act as amended by the Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children Protection Act in 1999. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 note) defines the term “homeless youth” as referring to an individual, not more than 21 years of age and not less than 16 years of age, for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement. “Runaway” is defined as any youth who, without permission, leaves home and stays away overnight, or, if away from home, chooses not to come home when expected. Finally, children and youth who are

denied housing by their families or prevented from returning home by a parent or other household adult may be referred to as "throwaway" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) or "thrownaway" children or youth (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002). The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act uses the term "street youth" to refer to both homeless youth and runaway youth. For clarity, in this study, the term "street youth" will be used as a general term to refer to runaway, homeless, and throwaway youth.[1]

## Demographic Characteristics of Street Youth

In the United States, statistics for street youth who are runaways and throwaways are estimated by the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMART), conducted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the U.S. Department of Justice (Flores, 2002). The most recent of these studies, NISMART-2, was published in 2002, based on data collected in 1999 (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002). NISMART-2 researchers estimated that 1,682,900 youth nationwide were missing due to a runaway or throwaway episode, with 50 percent being male, 50 percent being female, and with the majority of these youth (68 percent) being 15 to 17 years of age (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002).

Two other large-scale research studies of street youth are the Midwest Homeless and Runaway Adolescent Project (MHRAP), which included 602 individuals in Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a), and the Seattle Homeless Adolescent Research Project (SHARP), which included 372 individuals (Whitbeck et al., 2001). MHRAP and SHARP participants ranged from 12 to 22 years of age. In each of these studies, the number of male and female participants was approximately equal (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a; Whitbeck et al., 2001). The majority of the participants in both studies were of European-American, with African-Americans the next largest participant group (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a; Whitbeck et al., 2001). Most of the MHRAP participants had run away from a metropolitan area or a suburb of a metropolitan area, and most participants had spent most of their time in the week prior to the interview at a shelter, with friends, or with their parents or another relative (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a). The majority of the SHARP participants had spent at least part of the previous week in a shelter or on the streets (Whitbeck et al., 2001).

Both the MHRAP and SHARP studies included youth currently living on the street, in shelters or agencies, or with friends or relatives (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a; Whitbeck et al., 2001). Statistics and demographic information on runaways that do derive from sampling these types of locations may not be fully representative of the street youth population. Additionally, depending on the sample used, gender composition of studies of street youth may vary, with males generally overrepresented in street samples, and females generally overrepresented in shelter samples (Yoder, Whitbeck, & Hoyt, 2001).

A brief summary of pertinent demographic data from these large-scale studies is found in Exhibit 1.

[1] For the purposes of this paper, the category of "street youth" includes runaway, homeless, and throwaway youth who are currently residing in alternate housing, such as a shelter or with friends or relatives, as well as those literally living on the street (also see Methods section).

**Exhibit 1**
**Demographic Data from Large-Scale Studies of Street Youth**

| Sample site | Mean Age (years) | Percent Male | Percent Female | Percent White/ European American | Percent African American | References |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nationwide[a] (n=1,682,900) | 15 - 17 | 50 | 50 | 57 | 15 | Hammer et al., 2002 |
| Midwestern U.S. (n=602) | 16.24 | 40 | 60 | 61 | ~25 | Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999(a) |
| Seattle, WA (n=372) | 17.15 | 55 | 45 | 53 | 18 | Whitbeck et al., 2001 |

[a] Reflects runaway and throwaway youth sample combined.

## Pathways to Street Youth Status

Running away and being "thrown out" of the home are among the pathways most commonly identified by public policy and research as leading to youth homelessness. Youth who have run away, perhaps only briefly, and youth who have been homeless on a long-term basis are often combined into one subgroup for research purposes (e.g., MacLean, Embry, & Cauce, 1999; Thompson, Safyer, & Pollio, 2001; Zide & Cherry, 1992). MacLean and colleagues (1999) suggest that youth who have been runaways or homeless on a long-term basis have made a choice to live on the streets rather than in their homes, and suggest that this choice likely indicates that runaway and long-term homeless youth have left a particularly aversive family environment and are confident in their ability to survive on the street. MacLean and colleagues (1999) contrast runaways and long-term homeless youth with throwaway youth, who are less instrumental in making the decision to leave home. In a throwaway situation, the parents or guardians have made the decision that the youth leave home, often because some aspect of the youth's behavior is considered unacceptable to the parents or guardians (MacLean et al., 1999). However, Hammer and colleagues (2002) caution against generally viewing runaways as having left home voluntarily, as this view may not fully encompass the problems faced by runaways. For example, children and young adults who leave due to family conflict or abuse may "leave to protect themselves or because they are no longer wanted in the home. The term 'voluntary' does not properly apply to such situations" (Hammer et al., 2002, p. 2).

Runaway youth comprise the largest subgroup included in the present study (approximately 38 percent). To provide a better understanding of the lives of these adolescents both before and after leaving home, the following sections provide an overview of issues pertaining to the runaway subgroup of homeless youth. Further information on homeless and throwaway youth can be found in the paper by Toro and colleagues (2007) in this volume.

## Why Do Youth Run Away from Home?

The issues most often cited by youth as leading to runaway behavior are problems pertaining to family dynamics. In particular, runaway youth describe a family environment that is disorganized, dysfunctional, unpleasant, or dangerous (Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006; Safyer et al., 2004; Thompson & Pillai, 2006; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a). Runaways may leave home environments characterized by physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect; fighting or arguing between parents or between parents and the youth; drug or alcohol abuse; and frequent changes in family structure, including divorce, death, or the addition of new

members to the household (Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006; Thrane, Hoyt, Whitbeck & Yoder, 2006; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Cauce, 2002; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a). Among the MHRAP sample, it was found that increased changes in family structure and increased family disorganization were associated with increased rates of running away (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a). Runaway participants in a qualitative study by Martinez (2006) also cited family dynamics as being among their reasons for having left home. For example, some participants stated that they left home in hopes of changing problematic family dynamics or finding out if their family truly cared about them (Martinez, 2006).

Both runaways and their parents acknowledge contributing to the dysfunction or disorganization of the family structure, either through their own individual actions or through dysfunctional interactions in the parent-child relationship (Hyde, 2005; Safyer et al., 2004; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a). Reasons focusing on the youth as a direct agent of runaway behavior include not wanting to comply with household rules; behavior problems; alcohol abuse; truancy; a desire to live elsewhere; and a desire for independence, adventure, or excitement (de Man, 2000; Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006; Paradise & Cauce, 2003; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a). Runaways may also see the act of leaving home as a way to assert or exert control over an intolerable situation at home, or they may leave home impulsively to gain immediate relief from their problems (Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006). However, Martinez (2006) notes that impulsivity is not unique to running away from home and marks many other teenage behaviors as well.

One perspective utilized by researchers to explain the connection between problematic family dynamics and runaway behavior is primary socialization theory (Thompson, Kost, & Pollio, 2003; Whitbeck, 1999). According to primary socialization theory, the family typically serves as a positive resource for the youth in that the family protects the youth from risks and promotes prosocial behaviors. When the family fails to fulfill this role, the youth may instead bond with deviant peers who encourage the youth to engage in negative behaviors such as running away (Thompson et al., 2003).

Chronic running away may signify a desire for early adulthood (Martinez, 2006), or an early or precocious entry into adulthood (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a). As boundaries and ties within the family are weakened and the support of the family is reduced, adolescents become increasingly self-sufficient and/or dependent on options or allegiances with people outside of the family, which may lead to runaway behavior (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a).

The risk amplification developmental model is a theory of risk behavior developed on the basis of the MHRAP data (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999b). This model holds that there is increased risk specific to the life situations and behaviors of street youth. Specifically, psychologically harmed children leave home and enter situations in which multiple and cumulative risks are present, with negative developmental trajectories gaining momentum over time. For example, Whitbeck & Hoyt (1999a) found that, among the adolescent females included in the MHRAP sample, physical or sexual abuse within the family led to consequences such as substance use, affiliation with deviant peers, and street victimization, and that these consequences in turn led to increased likelihood of further victimization and emotional distress. Other studies have found that problematic family dynamics predict negative outcomes on the street (Thrane et al., 2006; Tyler et al., 2001). Failure to address problematic issues within the family or through social institutions such as schools and mental health services can lead to repeated running behavior and exposure to risk (Clatts, Goldsamt, Yi, & Gwadz, 2005; Martinez, 2006; Safyer et al., 2004).

Because poverty is often part of the family backgrounds of runaway and homeless youth (e.g., Sanchez et al., 2006; Thompson et al., 2003), Robert and colleagues (2005) caution against misinterpreting risk

factors as solely related to homelessness when they might be more appropriately attributed to an impoverished family background. In a comparison between samples of homeless adolescents and non-homeless adolescents from an impoverished family, it was found that both groups had dysfunctional family backgrounds. However, a greater proportion of homeless participants cited family-related adversity, such as conflict and violence. In addition, the homeless sample had a greater number of behavioral disorder diagnoses (Robert et al., 2005).

Other risk factors associated with running away are found at the level of the individual or his or her environment. These include factors related to school, such as truancy and low academic achievement (Sullivan & Knutson, 2000); the presence of behavioral or psychological disorders (Kingree, Braithwaite & Woodring, 2001; Robert et al., 2005; Whitbeck, Johnson, Hoyt, & Cauce, 2004); long-term placement in foster care (Nesmith, 2006); and, to some extent, minority ethnic/racial background (Nesmith, 2006; Thompson et al., 2001; Kingree et al., 2001).

Exhibit 2 provides a brief summary of risk issues associated with runaway status among youth.

**Exhibit 2**
**Risk Issues Associated with Status as a Runaway Youth**

| Risk Issue Category Leading to Decision to Leave Home | References |
|---|---|
| • *Family dynamics* (e.g., disorganized or dysfunctional household/family environment; fighting or arguing; substance use/abuse by family members; changes in family structure [e.g., divorce, deaths, extended family]) | Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a; Martinez, 2006; Thompson & Pillai, 2006; Hyde, 2005; Safyer et al., 2004 |
| • *Poverty* | Sanchez et al., 2006; Thompson et al., 2003 |
| • *Abuse/neglect* | Thrane et al., 2006; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Cauce, 2002; Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006 |
| • *Factors relating to individual motivation* (e.g., unwillingness to comply with household rules; behavior problems; desire for independence, adventure or excitement; desire to assert or exert control over an intolerable home/family situation) | Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a; Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006; de Man, 2000 |
| • *Substance use/abuse by youth* | Paradise & Cauce, 2003; van Leeuwen et al., 2004 |
| • *Behavioral or psychological disorders* | Kingree et al., 2001; Robert et al., 2005; Whitbeck et al., 2004 |
| • *Educational/academic difficulties* (e.g., truancy, low academic achievement) | Sullivan & Knutson, 2000 |
| • *Long-term placement in foster care* | Nesmith, 2006 |
| • *Minority or non-White/European-American ethnic or racial background* | Nesmith, 2006; Thompson et al., 2001; Kingree et al., 2001 |

## Limitations of Research on Runaways

It is difficult to make generalizations about runaway youth as a population due to the difficulty of obtaining large random or representative samples of such individuals. Runaway adolescents may not be accessible to researchers for several reasons. First, the amount of time during which adolescents may be considered “runaways” may be as long as several months or years, or as brief as an overnight period

during which they are not supervised by a parent or guardian. For example, under federal guidelines, if a youth is 14 years of age or younger (or older and mentally incompetent), staying away from home one night defines him or her as a runaway; if the youth is 15 years or older, staying away from home two nights defines him or her as a runaway (Hammer et al., 2002). Those youth who spend only a brief time as runaways may be absent from research samples. Further, runaway adolescents may find shelter in places not readily available to researchers, such as abandoned buildings or the homes of friends or relatives, and may thus be absent from research samples. Adolescents who are living away from home but whose whereabouts are known to their parents or guardians may not always be reported as missing, and may therefore be excluded from statistics on street youth collected by law enforcement agencies or by agencies that assist in the location of missing children. Finally, runaways may, to an uninformed observer, be indistinguishable from housed adolescents who are spending recreational time outside of their homes; therefore, runaway adolescents who "blend in" may not be recruited for research. Follow-up data may be difficult or impossible to obtain from runaway youth who are transient. All of these factors can affect the size of research samples of runaway youth and the generalizability of research findings from such samples.

The current study utilizes data from the National Runaway Switchboard, addressing several limitations and needs in the field of youth homelessness research as identified by Robertson and Toro (1999). These include the use of a large representative sample; the assessment of strengths as well as problems of homeless youth; the inclusion of youth from both rural and urban areas; and the use of a comparison sample of housed youth similar to non-housed youth in terms of crisis issues and help-seeking behavior. The following sections provide background on the National Runaway Switchboard and the services it provides.

## National Runaway Switchboard

The National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) is the federally designated national communication system serving runaway and homeless youth and their families, with the mission of ensuring the safety of runaway and at-risk youths and preventing runaway behavior. The hotline was established in 1971 as Metro-Help, a crisis hotline for runaway youth in the Chicago metropolitan area, and began providing services on a national level in 1974. NRS can be reached via a toll-free hotline from any state or territory, and is utilized by a number of different populations, including street youth; youth contemplating running away; youth in general crisis; and adult callers such as parents, relatives, teachers, law enforcement personnel, and social service agency staff. NRS provides prevention and intervention services through their hotline as well as through educational and outreach programs and web-based services, including a youth message board, a chat room for parents, and email communication with staff members trained in crisis intervention (NRS, 2004). Callers are referred to NRS in a variety of ways, including the phone book, social service agencies, word of mouth, television and radio public service announcements, promotional materials provided through schools or community agencies, and on the Internet through the official NRS Web site.

The major portion of direct services provided by NRS is administered to youth callers via telephone. A young adult may call the hotline seeking to utilize any of five services: crisis intervention, information and referral, message relay, conference calling, or the Home Free transportation program for runaway youth, which is administered by NRS in conjunction with Greyhound Lines, Inc. Crisis intervention is provided in a confidential, nonsectarian, nonjudgmental, and nondirective manner with the goal of empowering the youth to take control of his or her current situation and to make decisions with which he

or she feels comfortable (NRS, 2001). Hotline calls are handled by staff and supervised volunteers ("liners") who have, prior to taking calls independently, completed a minimum of 36.5 hours of training in active listening skills and classroom and experiential training in a solution-based crisis intervention model. The five components of this crisis intervention model are (1) establishing rapport; (2) exploring facts and feelings; (3) focusing on the main issues; (4) exploring options; and (5) establishing a plan of action.

A call log, including a checklist of issues relevant to the crisis situation, is filled out for each hotline call that involves crisis intervention. The information in this call log is based both on issues identified by the caller as contributing to the current crisis situation and issues identified by staff and liners based on the description of the situation as presented by the caller.

Many of the issues identified by research literature as correlated with or leading to runaway behavior, such as abuse and problematic family dynamics, are also identified by National Runaway Switchboard callers as prompting their help-seeking behavior. Studies of help-seeking youth who called NRS in 2004 identified issues that were mentioned with high frequency by runaways and by youth contemplating running away as well as issues that predicted status as street youth (runaway, throwaway, or homeless) or non-street youth (Molino, McBride, & Kekwaletswe, 2006a, 2006b). Issues frequently discussed by street youth included family dynamics, social issues or problems with peers, problems with youth service agencies, and school or education issues (Molino et al., 2006b). Issues frequently discussed by youth contemplating running away included family dynamics; social issues or problems with peers; problems with youth service agencies, school or education issues; and physical abuse (Molino et al., 2006b).

Further study of the NRS calls led Molino et al. (2006a) to identify issues predicting inclusion of callers in either the non-street youth or street youth category. Issues predicting status as a non-street youth caller included mental health issues of the youth, experience of emotional and verbal abuse, alcohol or drug use by the family, and suicidality of the youth. While these problematic issues were not exclusively identified by non-street youth, it appears that issues that were pressing or that led to help-seeking behavior were different for youth who were currently housed as opposed to issues identified by street youth, who were removed from the immediate household at the time of the call placed to the hotline.

Two issues were found to predict status as a street youth. One issue was family dynamics (Molino et al., 2006a). This result is consistent with current research on risk factors leading to street youth status, which suggests that the presence of disorganized or dysfunctional family dynamics is predictive of runaway behavior and homelessness among adolescents. The other predictive issue was judicial issues of the youth (Molino et al., 2006a). Judicial issues among street youth can occur for a number of reasons. For example, in the United States in 2005, an estimated 108,954 arrests were made for the offense of running away (U.S. Department of Justice, 2006). (However, the act of running away itself does not always result in an arrest. Criminal charges or consequences applied to runaways vary from state to state (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2003); further, runaways are not always noticeable to police due to their staying with friends and relatives.)

Runaway adolescents may also be arrested or taken into police custody for other acts committed while away from the home, including violation of probation, burglary, or drug dealing. Researchers emphasize that criminal offenses or illegal acts committed by runaways frequently are motivated by basic survival needs, such as food and shelter; the presence of adverse situations, such as hunger and unemployment; and a lack of opportunities for legitimate self-support (Kaufman & Widom, 1999; McCarthy & Hagan,

2001; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999). Additionally, while running away can increase the odds of the youth engaging in delinquent or criminal behavior, it can also increase the odds of the youth being exposed to or becoming the victim of criminal or delinquent acts (Hammer et al., 2002; Hoyt, Ryan, & Cauce, 1999). For example, it was found by Hoyt and colleagues (1999) that the amount of time homeless adolescents spent living on the streets, as well as prior experience of personal assault, was associated with increased risk of criminal victimization.

The relationship between childhood victimization, running away, and delinquency was examined in a study by Kaufman and Widom (1999) that followed groups of youth forward in time and assessed each research domain. Participants who had experienced abuse and neglect were more likely to have run away, and a significant relationship was found between running away and being arrested as a juvenile. The relationship between running away and delinquency remained significant even after controlling for gender, race, ethnicity, and family social class, with victims of abuse and neglect being more than twice as likely to run away as participants in the control sample, and runaways being more than twice as likely to be arrested as juveniles in comparison to non-runaways. The authors concluded that both running away and being victimized as a child increased the risk of delinquent behavior, and that running away moderated the relationship between childhood victimization and delinquency. Because running away was indicative of high-risk outcomes, the point in time at which a youth ran away was concluded to be a "critical point for intervention" (Kaufman & Widom, 1999, p. 368).

Although family dynamics and judicial issues have been found to predict inclusion of callers in the street youth category, issues identified by youth callers as prompting or preceding a call to the National Runaway Switchboard generally fall into any of 25 categories. These include family dynamics, mental and physical health issues, involvement of the youth in the judicial system, and issues related to transportation. A complete listing of general problem domains and issues falling within these general domains can be found in Appendix A.

The current study goes beyond prior research on NRS callers by utilizing a large sample; combining data from multiple years; and by examining additional variables, such as caller location, caller's prior experience with homelessness or having run away, and variables predicting recidivism (i.e., repeated running away) and street youth status.

# Method

## Participants

Participants included youth callers, ranging from under 12 to 21 years of age, who contacted the National Runaway Switchboard from January 2000 to December 2005 for assistance with personal crisis issues ($N$=30,266). To avoid using duplicate information and maintain a sample of unique cases, we excluded data for youth who stated that they had previously contacted NRS for assistance ($N$=4,375). Included in the street youth category ($n$=14,865) were callers who were classified as *runaways* ($n$=11,299), *homeless youth* ($n$=1,968), or *throwaways* ($n$=1,598). Included in the non-street youth category were callers who were identified as *contemplating running away* ($n$=5,136) or who called in with a *general crisis* issue unrelated to street youth status ($n$=9,983).

## Materials

Data were analyzed from call logs completed for each participant. These call logs consisted of five sections: 1) *caller profile*, including information such as demographic data and location; 2) *issues identified*, which is a checklist of common problems and risk factors cited by individuals as preceding or prompting their decision to call, 3) *resources*, which includes information on agencies to which the caller was referred, 4) *options discussed*, which is a checklist of common types of agencies and sources of help discussed with the caller, and 5) a *summary* of the call. Data analyzed in this project were limited to items from the caller profile and issues identified sections of the call logs.

The subgroup in which a caller to the hotline is classified (i.e., runaway, throwaway, homeless, contemplating running away, or youth in general crisis) is generally based on the caller's self-identification as a person belonging to one of those subgroups. Therefore, to some extent, the subgroup to which a caller belongs may reflect self-conceptualization in addition to their actual housed or non-housed circumstances. If no clear self-identification is made, hotline personnel use the information given by the caller regarding his or her situation to classify the youth.

## Procedure and Methods of Analysis

A call log was completed by a trained hotline volunteer ("liner") or staff member for each call made to NRS that involved crisis intervention. Data from these call logs were compiled into a central electronic database, and all personal identifiers were stripped from the data prior to analysis. Research questions and methods of analysis are summarized below:

- *What are demographic characteristics of help-seeking youth callers to NRS?* Frequency analysis was used to describe the demographic characteristics of help-seeking youth callers. The resulting data described the number of occurrences for the following variables: age; gender; status of the individual as a runaway, throwaway, or homeless youth; location of the youth at the time of the call; whether the youth had crossed state lines, and if so, the state of origin; length of time away from home; and number of prior runaway or homeless experiences.
- *What risk issues are frequently identified by help-seeking youth callers to NRS?* Frequency analysis was used to describe problem issues or risk factors identified by youth callers as prompting or preceding their call to NRS.
- *Are certain problems associated with street youth or non-street youth status?* Based on the results of the frequency analysis utilized for Research Question 3, certain risk factors were identified that substantially differentiated between street youth and non-street youth groups. To examine the associations between these risk factors and street youth status, logistic regression analysis was used.
- *Does number/type of risk issues help predict repeat running?* Correlational[2] and logistic regression analyses were used to describe the relationships between increases in recidivism of running behavior and the type and number of issues identified by the youth as prompting help-seeking behavior.

[2] Because preliminary analysis of the data indicated that the recidivism variable was not normally distributed for this sample, a nonparametric test was used for correlational analysis (Spearman's rho).

# Results

## Demographic Data

The majority of callers to NRS were female and, on average, callers were in their mid-teens. Demographic and personal characteristics of the total sample of youth callers to NRS are found in Exhibits 3–6.[3] A summary table of key demographic data is provided in Exhibit 7.

NRS services are available to any youth in crisis, whether or not they have left home. Not surprisingly, given that NRS's name and marketing materials imply that runaway youth are the primary target group, most callers were either runaways (38 percent) or were considering running away (17 percent); at the same time, a substantial proportion of callers were youth in general crisis (33 percent; see Exhibit 3). Smaller numbers of callers identified themselves as throwaways (5 percent) or homeless (7 percent). On average, callers were 16.1 years old. Most callers were female (70 percent), with males making up just under 30 percent. A small number of callers (less than 1 percent) identified as transgender.[4] These findings are consistent with prior research, which suggests that females are generally overrepresented in samples of youth that are drawn from service agencies (Yoder, Whitbeck & Hoyt, 2001).

Callers classified as street youth included those who identified themselves as *runaways, homeless youth*, or *throwaways*. Like the sample overall, street youth callers in general tended to be female (66 percent) and in their mid-teens (16.3 years). Among street youth, those identifying themselves as homeless were older on average (18.2 years) while runaway youth were younger (16.0 years). It is possible that, in comparison to street youth approaching the age of majority, younger street youth are more inclined to view themselves as being able to return to their family homes, or as having parents or guardians responsible for their well-being. Another potential explanation is that older street youth may have been homeless for an extended period of time, and are therefore more likely to conceptualize themselves as being without any home at all, rather than simply being away from home.

Youth who were classified as non-street youth included those who were *contemplating running away* and those who called in with a *general crisis issue* unrelated to running away. The non-street youth were even more likely than street youth to be female (74 percent) and were slightly younger than the street youth (15.9 years, on average).

Callers contacted NRS from a variety of locations including friends' or relatives' homes, police stations, school, or bus stations, as shown in Exhibit 4. Most street youth (38 percent) were at a friend's home when they contacted NRS. About 10 percent of callers were at a shelter and a similar percent of callers were calling from a payphone. In November 2005, three new categories of general location were added to the NRS call log: the home of a recent acquaintance, a Greyhound station, and a location that the youth could not identify ("unknown to caller"). Because these locations were added to the call log relatively close to the end of the sampling period, there are few responses in these categories. Future research on call log data may reflect higher rates of calls made to NRS from these locations. Additional analyses of street youth caller location indicated that the states or territories from which the most calls were received were California (17 percent) and Texas (10 percent). It is likely that these statistics reflect the high populations of California and Texas relative to other states and territories (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

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[3] Information regarding the racial or ethnic background of callers is not collected during crisis calls.

[4] Information on transgender as a gender category was recorded only for calls received January 2005 or later.

**Exhibit 3**

**Demographic Characteristics of Youth Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| Characteristic | *n* | (Percent) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Status of total sample[a] | | | |
| Runaway | 11299 | (37.7%) | |
| Throwaway | 1598 | (5.3%) | |
| Homeless | 1968 | (6.6%) | |
| Contemplating running away | 5136 | (17.1%) | |
| Youth in general crisis | 9983 | (33.3%) | |
| Gender of total sample[b] | | | |
| Male | 9044 | (29.9%) | |
| Female | 21199 | (70.1%) | |
| Transgender* | 3 | (Non-significant percentage of sample) | |
| Gender by status subgroup[c] | | | |
| Runaway | | | |
| Male | 3642 | (32.2%) | |
| Female | 7652 | (67.8%) | |
| Transgender* | 1 | (Non-significant percentage of sample) | |
| Throwaway | | | |
| Male | 517 | (32.4%) | |
| Female | 1080 | (67.6%) | |
| Homeless | | | |
| Male | 906 | (46.1%) | |
| Female | 1058 | (53.9%) | |
| Contemplating running away | | | |
| Male | 1075 | (20.9%) | |
| Female | 4059 | (79.1%) | |
| Youth in general crisis | | | |
| Male | 2834 | (28.4%) | |
| Female | 7142 | (71.6%) | |
| Transgender* | 2 | (Non-significant percentage of sample) | |
| | Mean | (SD) | Range |
| Age of total sample (years)[d] | 16.14 | (1.81) | 12 – 21 |
| Age by status subgroup (years)[e] | | | |
| Runaway | 15.99 | (1.46) | 12 – 21 |
| Throwaway | 16.55 | (1.42) | 12 – 21 |
| Homeless | 18.23 | (1.48) | 12 – 21 |
| Contemplating running away | 15.27 | (1.61) | 12 – 21 |
| Youth in general crisis | 16.26 | (1.99) | 12 – 21 |

[a] Based on 29,984 valid responses.
[b] Based on 30,243 valid responses.
[c] Based on 29,968 valid responses.
[d] Based on 29,960 valid responses.
[e] Based on 29,713 valid responses.

** Information on transgender as a gender category was recorded only for calls received January 2005 or later.*

**Exhibit 4**

**Location of Street Youth Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

General location of street youth callers during call[a]

| Location | *n* | (Percent) | Location | *n* | (Percent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Detention/police | 897 | (6.8%) | School | 62 | (0.5%) |
| Friend | 5011 | (37.9%) | Shelter | 1400 | (10.6%) |
| Recent acquaintance* | 8 | (0.1%) | Street/payphone | 1448 | (10.9%) |
| Home | 201 | (1.5%) | Greyhound station* | 15 | (0.1%) |
| Other | 574 | (4.3%) | Unknown to hotline staff | 2704 | (20.4%) |
| Pimp/dealer | 43 | (0.3%) | Unknown to caller* | 11 | (0.1%) |
| Relative | 838 | (6.3%) | Work | 26 | (0.2%) |

[a] Based on 13,238 valid responses.

** These locations recorded only for calls received November 2005 and later.*

Information pertaining to the extent of impact of current and past homelessness on street youth callers, in terms of time, distance, and prior experience as a street youth, is found in Exhibits 5 and 6. Most street youth callers had been away from home for one day (22 percent), and more than half of the street youth callers (58 percent) had been away from home for one week or less. The majority of callers (57 percent) had not crossed state or territory borders at time of the call. Among those who had crossed borders, most had left California (10 percent) and Texas (7 percent).

The majority of street youth callers (59 percent) had not run away prior to contacting NRS for assistance. Among the callers who had previously run away, the average number of prior runaway episodes was approximately 4. Similarly, the majority of callers (73 percent) had not been homeless prior to calling NRS. Among callers who had previously been homeless, the mean number of prior episodes of homelessness was approximately 3.[5]

## Risk Issues

For the total sample of callers, the most frequently reported general category of risk issues was family dynamics (74 percent). This finding is consistent with existing literature that suggests that running away and youth homelessness are both associated with and predicted by problems in the family or household (Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006; Safyer et al., 2004; Sanchez et al., 2006; Thompson & Pillai, 2006; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a). Within the domain of family dynamics, the subcategory of risk issues most frequently reported by the total sample were problems with parents or guardians and conflict with family or household rules.

Other frequently reported categories of issues among the total sample were peer or social problems (27 percent), problems related to youth or family service agencies (21 percent), physical abuse or assault (15

[5] Data on prior homelessness was available only for calls received in September 2001 and later.

**Exhibit 5**

**Extent of Impact of Current Homelessness on the Street Youth Subgroup of Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, in Terms of Time and Geographical Distance.**

| | Subgroup Status | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Sample | | Runaway | | Throwaway | | Homeless | |
| Time [a] | *n* | (Percent) | *n* | (Percent) | *n* | (Percent) | *n* | (Percent) |
| 1 day | 3169 | (22.4%) | 2128 | (19.6%) | 638 | (42.6%) | 403 | (22.6%) |
| 2 days | 1334 | (9.4%) | 1000 | (9.2%) | 163 | (10.9%) | 171 | (9.6%) |
| 3 days | 942 | (6.7%) | 744 | (6.9%) | 94 | (6.3%) | 104 | (5.8%) |
| 4 days | 584 | (4.1%) | 506 | (4.7%) | 34 | (2.3%) | 44 | (2.5%) |
| 5 days | 513 | (3.6%) | 420 | (3.9%) | 37 | (2.5%) | 56 | (3.1%) |
| 6 days | 180 | (1.3%) | 168 | (1.5%) | 5 | (0.3%) | 7 | (0.4%) |
| 1 week | 1535 | (10.9%) | 1273 | (11.7%) | 119 | (7.9%) | 143 | (8.0%) |
| 2 weeks | 1153 | (8.2%) | 937 | (8.6%) | 88 | (5.9%) | 128 | (7.2%) |
| 3 weeks | 676 | (4.8%) | 558 | (5.1%) | 40 | (2.7%) | 78 | (4.4%) |
| 1 month | 1152 | (8.2%) | 924 | (8.5%) | 66 | (4.4%) | 162 | (9.1%) |
| 2 months | 850 | (6.0%) | 689 | (6.4%) | 58 | (3.9%) | 103 | (5.8%) |
| 3 months | 519 | (3.7%) | 398 | (3.7%) | 32 | (2.1%) | 89 | (5.0%) |
| 4 months | 256 | (1.8%) | 209 | (1.9%) | 17 | (1.1%) | 30 | (1.7%) |
| 5 months | 141 | (1.0%) | 118 | (1.1%) | 13 | (0.9%) | 10 | (0.6%) |
| 6 months | 264 | (1.9%) | 195 | (1.8%) | 25 | (1.7%) | 44 | (2.5%) |
| 7 months | 85 | (0.6%) | 68 | (0.6%) | 6 | (0.4%) | 11 | (0.6%) |
| 8 months | 69 | (0.5%) | 59 | (0.5%) | 1 | (0.1%) | 9 | (0.5%) |
| 9 months | 42 | (0.3%) | 31 | (0.3%) | 4 | (0.3%) | 7 | (0.4%) |
| 10 months | 27 | (0.2%) | 25 | (0.2%) | 2 | (0.1%) | 0 | (0.0%) |
| 11 months | 7 | (Non-significant) | 7 | (0.1%) | 0 | (0.0%) | 0 | (0.0%) |
| 1 year or more | 624 | (4.4%) | 384 | (3.5%) | 56 | (3.7%) | 184 | (10.3%) |

| | *n* | (Percent) |
|---|---|---|
| Had the youth crossed state or territory lines to get to his or her current location? [b] | | |
| Yes | 5606 | (43.1%) |
| No | 7408 | (56.9%) |

[a] Based on 14,122 total valid responses.

[b] Based on 13,014 total valid responses.

**Exhibit 6**

**Past Experience of Homelessness by Street Youth Callers**

| | *n* | (Percent) | | Mean | (SD) | Range |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Had the youth ever run away from home before?[a] | | | | | | |
| Yes | 3786 | (29.0%) | If "yes," how many times had youth run away before?[b] | 4.31 | 10.57 | 1–99 |
| No | 7675 | (58.9%) | | | | |
| Unknown to hotline staff | 1576 | (12.1%) | | | | |
| Had the youth ever been homeless before?[c] | | | | | | |
| Yes | 761 | (8.0%) | If "yes," how many times had youth been homeless before?[d] | 2.96 | 8.57 | 1–99 |
| No | 6936 | (72.9%) | | | | |
| Unknown to hotline staff | 1813 | (19.1%) | | | | |

[a] Based on 13,037 total valid responses.
[b] Based on 3,692 valid responses.
[c] Based on 9,510 valid responses.
[d] Based on 697 valid responses.

**Exhibit 7**

**Key Demographic Data for Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005**

| | |
|---|---|
| Total sample: | |
| Average age | 16.1 years |
| Male | 29.9 percent |
| Female | 70.1 percent |
| Transgender* | Non-significant percentage of sample |
| Location at time of call to NRS: | |
| Friend's home | 37.9 percent |
| Street / Payphone | 10.9 percent |
| Shelter | 10.6 percent |
| Duration of street youths' time away from home: | |
| One day | 22.4 percent |
| > One day, less than 1 week | 25.2 percent |
| 1 week to < 1 month | 23.8 percent |
| > 1 month | 28.6 percent |
| Previous runs?[a] | |
| Yes | 29.0 percent |
| No | 58.9 percent |
| Previously homeless?[a] | |
| Yes | 8.0 percent |
| No | 72.9 percent |

[a] Percentages sum to less than 100 percent because these numbers exclude "unknown" replies.

** Information on transgender as a gender category was recorded only for calls received January 2005 or later.*

percent), and problems related to school or education (14 percent). The most frequently reported peer or social problems for the total set of callers, as well as for the runaway and homeless subgroups, were a need for adventure or independence, and problems related to Internet relationships.

For throwaway callers, problems with friends or acquaintances and relationship problems were the most frequently reported peer or social issues. Issues related to protective service agencies most frequently pertained to county agencies (e.g., CPS, DCFS); residential, foster or group homes; and runaway shelters. Physical abuse or assault was frequently reported by the total sample and by runaway and throwaway callers relative to the reported rate of issues falling within other general domains of problems. Physical abuse or assault was most frequently perpetrated by a parent, and least frequently perpetrated by a non-relative. School/education issues most frequently reported by the total sample included problems with grades, dropping out, and truancy. For runaway and throwaway youth, the most frequently reported school/education issues were dropping out, truancy, and problems with grades. Problems with school or education were, in general, reported by relatively few long-term homeless youth (8 percent) as compared to the total sample (14 percent) and the runaway and throwaway samples (17 percent and 11 percent, respectively).

In general, the problems most frequently reported by street youth paralleled the problems most frequently reported by the sample as a whole. However, issues related to transportation were more frequently reported by runaways (18 percent) and homeless youth (19 percent) in comparison to the total sample (11 percent). This is likely related to homeless adolescents' general lack of access to resources, lack of contact with adults who might provide transportation, and inability to pay for transportation. Transportation issues may also be overrepresented among this sample in comparison to other research samples of street youth due to NRS's well-publicized Home Free program.

In addition, neglect was much more frequently reported by throwaways (25 percent) in comparison to the total sample (6 percent) and the runaway and homeless youth subgroups (5 percent and 4 percent, respectively). High rates of neglect among throwaways may be directly related to the manner in which these adolescents come to be away from their home, in that being thrown out or denied access to the home suggests that the parent or guardian is refusing responsibility for the youth's care.

It should be noted that any individual caller could potentially have indicated that he or she was experiencing problems in more than one general category as well as more than one than one specific problem or risk issue within each general category. A summary of the risk issue categories most frequently mentioned by callers is provided in Exhibit 8. A full listing of frequency analysis results for general categories and subcategories of risk issues is reported in Appendix B.

### *Risk Issues Predicting Street Youth or Non-Street Youth Status*

Based on the frequency analyses of issues that prompted or preceded calls to NRS, risk issues were selected that substantially differentiated between street youth and non-street youth for further exploration (see Exhibits 9 and 10). Based on prior research involving NRS callers (Molino et al., 2006a, 2006b), it was expected that family dynamics and judicial issues of the youth would be among the issues found to predict street youth status, while mental health issues, emotional and verbal abuse, suicidality, and family substance use would be among the issues found to predict non-street youth status. Other risk issues examined during this analysis included problems with youth or family service agencies, neglect, issues pertaining to school or education, physical health issues of the youth and issues related to transportation. In contrast to earlier research involving NRS callers (Molino et al., 2006b), alcohol or drug use by the

family was found to be a non-significant predictor of both street youth and non-street youth status for the sample, and was thus removed from the final regression model.

**Exhibit 8**

**Key Risk Issue Data: Issues Most Frequently Mentioned by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005[a]**

| Total Sample | | Runaway Youth | | Throwaway Youth | | Homeless Youth | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family dynamics | 74% | Family dynamics | 80% | Family dynamics | 91% | Family dynamics | 59% |
| Peer/social | 28% | Peer/social | 31% | Youth/family service agencies | 32% | Peer/social | 24% |
| Youth/family service agencies | 21% | Youth/family service agencies | 26% | Neglect | 25% | Youth/family service agencies | 22% |
| Physical abuse/assault | 16% | Physical abuse/assault | 19% | Physical abuse/assault | 14% | Transportation | 19% |
| School/education | 14% | Transportation | 18% | Peer/social | 13% | Economic issues | 11% |

[a] Percentages sum to more than 100 percent because individual callers may have reported more than one category of risk issues.

**Exhibit 9**

**Variables Predicting Status as a Street Youth for Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005**

| Variables | B | SE | Odds Ratio | 95% CI | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Involvement of the youth in the judicial system | 0.70 | 0.06 | 2.02 | 1.78 – 2.29 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Problems with youth or family service agencies | 0.60 | 0.03 | 1.83 | 1.72 – 1.94 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Neglect | 0.39 | 0.06 | 1.47 | 1.32 – 1.64 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Family dynamics | 0.35 | 0.03 | 1.42 | 1.34 – 1.50 | $p < 0.01$ |
| School or education issues | 0.14 | 0.04 | 1.15 | 1.07 – 1.23 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Issues related to transportation | 1.35 | 0.05 | 3.85 | 3.52 – 4.20 | $p < 0.01$ |

**Exhibit 10**

**Variables Predicting Status as a Non–Street Youth for Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005**

| Variables | B | SE | Odds Ratio | 95% CI | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mental health issues of the youth | 0.87 | 0.04 | 2.38 | 2.19 – 2.59 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Suicidality of the youth | 0.79 | 0.08 | 2.20 | 1.89 – 2.57 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Emotional or verbal abuse | 0.43 | 0.04 | 1.54 | 1.42 – 1.68 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Physical health issues of the youth | 0.35 | 0.05 | 1.42 | 1.30 – 1.56 | $p < 0.01$ |

Using a regression model,[6] issues related to transportation were the single best predictor of street youth status (odds ratio [OR] = 3.85), but these issues were likely to have been reported particularly frequently among our sample because NRS provides access to the Home Free program. The other general problem domains that best predicted inclusion in the street youth category were involvement of the youth in the judicial system, problems with youth or family service agencies, neglect, family dynamics and issues pertaining to school or education. The problem domains that best predicted non-street status were mental health issues, suicidality, emotional or verbal abuse and physical health issues. These findings were generally consistent with prior research on NRS callers (Molino et al., 2006b), and also call attention to additional issues that were not noted as significant in previous studies of NRS callers.

A summary of the risk issue categories predicting street youth and non-street youth status is provided in Exhibit 11.

**Exhibit 11**

**Summary Table of Risk Issues Predicting Street and Non-Street Youth Status for Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005**

| Risk Issues Predicting Inclusion in Street Youth Category | Risk Issues Predicting Inclusion in Non-Street Youth Category |
|---|---|
| • Involvement of youth in judicial system | • Mental health issues of the youth |
| • Problems with youth/family service agencies | • Suicidality of the youth |
| • Neglect | • Emotional/verbal abuse |
| • Family dynamics | • Physical health issues of the youth |
| • School/education issues | |
| • Transportation issues | |

## Relationship Between Recidivism of Running Behavior and Risk/Problem Issues

Using correlative analyses,[7] we found a significant but relatively small relationship between recidivism of running behavior (repeated running away) and the number of problem domains reported by callers (Spearman's rho = 0.194, $p < 0.01$). Youth who, at the time of the call, reported two or more prior episodes of runaway behavior at the time of the call ("repeat runners," n = 3,022) comprised 25% of the sample.

Further analyses, exploratory in nature, were performed to examine the relationship between reported problem issues and recidivism of running behavior. Based on the results of frequency analysis of reported risk issues, we selected general domains of problematic issues that substantially differentiated between repeat runners and non-runners. These issues included family dynamics, alcohol or drug use by the youth, alcohol or drug use by the family, physical abuse or assault, involvement of the youth in the judicial system, problems with youth or family service agencies, peer or social issues, school or education issues, issues related to GLBTQ status, and issues related to transportation. To assess the relative importance of these variables to repeat runner or non-runner status, these variables were entered into a regression

[6] The technique used was stepwise multivariate logistic regression analysis.

[7] The technique used was a nonparametric correlative analysis (Spearman's rho) appropriate to variables that are not normally distributed.

model[8] (see Exhibits 12 and 13). Alcohol or drug use by the family was found to be a non-significant predictor of both repeat runner and non-runner status for our sample and was removed from the final regression model.

**Exhibit 12**

**Variables Predicting Status as a "Repeat Runner" (Youth Reported Having Run Away from Home at Least Twice) for Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005**

| Variables | B | SE | Odds Ratio | 95% CI | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Involvement of the youth in the judicial system | 1.48 | 0.10 | 4.25 | 3.48 – 5.18 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Alcohol or drug use by the youth | 0.88 | 0.09 | 2.42 | 2.02 – 2.90 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Family dynamics | 0.60 | 0.07 | 1.82 | 1.60 – 2.07 | $p < 0.01$ |
| School or education issues | 0.60 | 0.06 | 1.82 | 1.62 – 2.04 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Problems with youth or family service agencies | 0.57 | 0.05 | 1.76 | 1.59 – 1.95 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Physical abuse or assault | 0.32 | 0.06 | 1.38 | 1.22 – 1.55 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Peer or social issues | 0.21 | 0.05 | 1.24 | 1.12 – 1.36 | $p < 0.01$ |
| Issues related to transportation | 1.24 | 0.07 | 3.44 | 3.00 – 3.94 | $p < 0.01$ |

**Exhibit 13**

**Variables Predicting Status as a "Non-Prior Runner" (Youth Had Not Previously Run Away from Home) for Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005**

| Variables | B | SE | Odds Ratio | 95% CI | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Issues related to GLBTQ status | 0.88 | 0.18 | 2.41 | 1.69 – 3.43 | $p < 0.01$ |

In general, status as a non-runner or repeat runner cannot be consistently predicted based on the types of problematic issues indicated, although repeat runners had experienced a wide variety of problematic issues. Experiencing problems in any of the problem domains included in the regression model significantly increased the probability of status as a repeat runner ($p < 0.01$), with the exception of the GLBTQ issue category, which was the only predictor reported more often by non-runners (3.7 percent) than by repeat runners (1.3 percent). Conversely, experiencing problems in any of the problem domains included in the regression model, with the exception of GLBTQ issues, significantly decreased the probability of being a non-runner ($p < 0.01$). Overall classification was inconsistent; on the basis of the nine significant predictors, correction classification rates were 96 percent for non-runners, but only 21 percent for repeat runners.

[8] The technique used was stepwise multivariate logistic regression analysis.

## Discussion and Conclusions

Runaways comprised the largest of the five caller subgroups, which likely reflects the way in which NRS crisis intervention services are marketed. Although services are available to any youth who considers him or herself to be in a crisis situation (i.e., a situation that he or she considers to be intolerable or unmanageable), the name of the agency and the wording of promotional materials indicate that runaway youth are its target population.

Overall, callers were in their mid-teens, with the exception of the homeless subgroup, whose average age was around 18 years. It is possible that this reflects a tendency of older non-housed adolescents to think of themselves as being without a home, and of younger non-housed adolescents to think of themselves as being away from a primary home. However, this theme has not yet been directly examined in the literature.

For all five caller subgroups, the majority of callers were female. This finding is consistent with gender distributions found in other research studies on youth homelessness that utilize samples recruited through service agencies (Yoder et al., 2001). It is possible that gender distribution in this study reflects a larger theme of female street youth being more likely than males to seek assistance from formal sources of support, such as crisis hotlines. While some information was available on transgender youth, our statistics are limited because information in the transgender category was only recorded during the last year of available data. Further, because NRS provides crisis intervention to all callers regardless of gender, and because gender is, in many cases, largely unrelated to the process of providing crisis intervention, categorization of the youth as transgender is highly dependent on the caller directly disclosing such information to hotline personnel.

The crisis issues most frequently identified across caller subgroups were related to family dynamics, peer or social problems, and problems with youth or family service agencies. Problems related to family dynamics were mentioned by a majority of the total sample as well as by all three subgroups of street youth. Within the family dynamics category, problems with parents and conflict with family or household rules were identified by a majority of participants. These findings are consistent with literature on risk factors for runaway behavior (Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006; Safyer et al., 2004; Thompson & Pillai, 2006; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a).

Since disorganized or dysfunctional family systems are frequently associated with runaway behavior, it follows that effective interventions can be implemented at the family level. Furthermore, youth who have ever experienced homelessness due to running away are frequently found in a housed situation. Results from NISMART-2 indicated that most runaways are gone for less than one week, with 99.6 percent having returned within a year (Hammer et al., 2002). Based on the NISMART-2 findings, Sanchez and colleagues (2006) concluded that most youth with runaway experiences are located in their family homes. Interventions targeting these youth will likely involve the family. Additionally, because the goal of federally funded shelters is reunification of families, it is necessary to address problematic family dynamics to ensure successful long-term placement in the home (Kidd, 2003; Thompson et al., 2003). Finally, in some cases, runaway and homeless youth cite family members as providing positive support and an impetus to succeed. In these cases, maintaining positive family relationships is beneficial for runaway youth (Kidd, 2003; Kurtz, Lindsey, Jarvis, & Nackerud, 2000; Robert et al., 2005). For all these reasons, it is important that family and household factors are considered in long-term intervention plans for runaway youth. Policy recommendations suggested by researchers include the focusing of primary

intervention efforts on the family, the inclusion of important family members in designing effective interventions, and the careful examination of the suitability of the home before reuniting a runaway youth with his or her family (Kidd, 2003; Riley, Greif, Caplan, & MacAulay, 2004; Robert et al., 2005; Thompson et al., 2003).

In general, street youth callers sought assistance relatively soon after leaving home. Over half of street youth callers contacted the hotline within one week of leaving home, and more than one-fifth of those callers (approximately 22 percent) contacted the hotline within one day of leaving home. In addition, for street youth callers whose general location at the time of the call was known, the majority were already receiving assistance to some extent from either a formal resource, such as police or a shelter, or a familiar resource, such as a friend or relative. Comparatively fewer callers contacted the hotline from a street area, a payphone, or the location of a pimp or dealer. This suggests that, while the participants in this study demonstrate help-seeking initiative by contacting NRS, they are also capable of locating and utilizing resources to handle their crisis situations even before receiving further aid or referrals through the hotline.

Predictors of status as a street youth included judicial issues of the youth, problems with youth or family service agencies, neglect, problematic family dynamics, and issues pertaining to school or education. The endorsing of these issues increased the odds of inclusion in the street youth category by factors of 2.02, 1.83, 1.47, 1.42 and 1.15 respectively. These results are consistent with current research suggesting that disorganized or dysfunctional households marked by high rates of verbal and physical conflict, as well as by escalating antisocial behavior on the part of the youth, are predictive of runaway behavior and homelessness among adolescents (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999a; Hyde, 2005; Martinez, 2006). Services for street youth that target these types of issues may alleviate the hardship and stress of being homeless.

Predictors of status as a non-street youth included mental health issues of the youth, suicidality of the youth, having experienced emotional or verbal abuse, and physical health issues of the youth. The endorsing of these problematic issues by callers increased the odds of inclusion in the non-street youth category by factors of 2.38, 2.20, 1.54 and 1.42 respectively. This suggests that crisis issues that are seen as particularly stressful, or that lead to help-seeking behavior, are different for youth who are currently housed as opposed to issues identified by street youth, who are removed from the immediate household at the time of the call placed to the hotline. These types of issues may be important to address in programs aimed at preventing homelessness and promoting the overall well-being of adolescents.

The majority of street youth callers had not run away or been homeless before. For those who had previously run away or been homeless, the number of prior episodes during which they had been non-housed varied widely. The number of prior runs and prior episodes of homelessness ranged from 1 to 99 (or more); the average number of runs was approximately 4 and the average number of prior episodes of homelessness was approximately 3. A significant but relatively small correlation was found between the average number of reported general problem domains and the number of prior runs (Spearman's rho = 0.194, $p < 0.01$).

Regression analyses found that predictors of youth having repeatedly run away from home included problematic family dynamics, substance use by the youth, the experience of physical abuse or assault, involvement of the youth in the judicial system, problems with youth or family service agencies, peer or social issues, school or education issues, and issues related to transportation. Issues related to GLBTQ status predicted youth having never run away before ("non-runner"). It should be noted that frequency analyses found that repeat runners were more likely than non-runners to have reported the majority of the

risk issue categories in the call log (17 out of 25 total categories). The results of the regression analyses are consistent with the results of these frequency analyses. It is likely that the lack of predictors for non-runners was affected by the tendency of repeat runners to more frequently report problems in any of the potential issue categories.

Despite the limitations of these analyses, the results provide information on the way in which the reporting of problematic issues by callers affected the odds of inclusion in the repeat runner versus the non-runner category. The risk issue categories that best predicted repeat runner status included judicial problems of the youth, issues related to transportation, and alcohol or drug use by the youth, which increased the odds of inclusion in the prior runner category by factors of 4.25, 3.44, and 2.42 respectively. While issues related to transportation predicted inclusion in the repeat runner category, they were likely to have been reported frequently among our sample due to NRS providing access to the Home Free program. The reporting of issues related to GLBTQ status increased the odds of inclusion in the non-runner category by a factor of 2.41. These results do not imply that repeat runners do not experience GLBTQ issues, nor do the results imply that non-runners do not experience the types of problems reported by repeat runners. Rather, different risk issues may be more important to or salient for youth who have repeatedly run away, as compared to youth who have not run away. It is also possible that the types of issues for which repeat runners are inclined to seek help are different from the types of issues for which non-runners are inclined to seek help.

While the analysis correctly classified a large majority of non-runners, it failed to classify a large majority of repeat runners. This suggests that, for this sample and the regression model used, we are limited in our ability to consistently predict runaway recidivism from the number or types of problem domains reported. Other factors may be more pertinent to whether or not a youth repeatedly runs away, such as prior runaway experience (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999), the severity of the problem issues, the extent to which a youth experiences stressors as problematic, and the ability of the youth to cope with such stressors. Runaway participants in this study experienced a wide variety of problem issues in different combinations, supporting the idea that there is no “typical” runaway youth (NRS, 2004). If the type and number of issues are idiosyncratic to each runaway, it may not be possible to reliably predict which individuals run away, or which individuals run away repeatedly. Efforts by runaway prevention and intervention programs to generally reduce risk and increase resilience will likely reduce overall rates of runaway behavior.

## Limitations

The conclusions that can be drawn from the current study are limited in several ways. First, the data were collected to facilitate crisis intervention, rather than to answer specific research questions; therefore, the types of statistical analyses that could be applied to the data were limited. In addition, some call logs contained limited or incomplete data. For example, items may have gone unanswered if the caller declined to give particular pieces of information about him or herself or about the crisis situation. The data also consist of information from help-seeking individuals, who may differ from individuals who do not seek assistance in alleviating their crisis situations. For example, help-seeking individuals may have been more likely to disclose information about their problems or to have disclosed more serious issues such as physical abuse. The data were based on self-report and are thus potentially subject to biases such as social desirability or the selective underreporting of particular crisis issues. Underreported issues may have included experiences that involved some element of social stigma, such as having been sexually assaulted, or that involved the disclosure of criminal behavior perpetrated by the youth. Self-report biases

may also have contributed to the relatively low rates of reported sexual abuse or assault among this sample as compared to reported rates of neglect and of physical, verbal and emotional abuse. Callers who wished to receive confidential help for their crisis situations may also have been reluctant to disclose issues that they believed would result in the contacting of law enforcement or protective service agencies, such as suicidality, violation of probation or parole, or parental abuse.

It is also difficult to determine whether the problematic issues of street youth, as recorded in the call log, occurred before or after the adolescent came to be away from the home. Therefore, the extent to which one can interpret a reported problem as a risk factor for becoming homeless, as opposed to a consequence of homelessness, is limited for this research sample. In addition, because the data are cross-sectional, the extent to which conclusions can be drawn about causality is limited.

Finally, the information provided by callers is subject to interpretation by the staff and trained volunteers who provide crisis intervention services. While NRS hotline staff and volunteer liners receive the same type and number of hours of initial training before taking calls and follow the same model of crisis intervention, the interpretation of data may vary depending on level of skill or amount of experience.

## Future Research Directions and Considerations

Our understanding of homeless youth and their needs will benefit from research studies that utilize large representative samples of both help-seeking and non-help seeking individuals who reside in a variety of locations, including shelters, friends' homes and street locations. In addition, prevention and intervention programs can be made more effective and appropriate when guided by findings from longitudinal research studies and other research efforts that identify a timeline of occurrence of problematic issues in the lives of homeless youth. The identification of problematic issues occurring before youths become homeless will assist prevention programs in better identifying risk factors contributing to street youth status, while the identification of problematic issues occurring after youths become homeless will help intervention and support programs for street youth to better meet the needs of their target population.

In making policy recommendations, researchers must take into consideration the potential differences in local laws that impact the lives and rights of homeless adolescent research participants. These include differences in the age of majority as defined by each state; local laws and regulations regarding loitering and squatting; and local laws and regulations regarding the potential penalties for runaway behavior, which can vary across states (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2003).

Future research questions that may help to expand on the findings of the current study as well as address recent issues mentioned by callers to the hotline, include:

- What factors lead a youth to characterize him- or herself as runaway, homeless, or throwaway?
- What is the timeline of occurrence of problematic issues in the lives of homeless and runaway youth?
- Do youth who repeatedly run away report a difference in type, severity, or number of problematic issues that occur before their first run as compared to before subsequent runs?

APPENDIX A

General Categories and Subcategories of Crisis Issues Recorded in National Runaway Switchboard Call Logs for Youth Crisis Callers, 2000–2005.

| General Category | Subcategories |
|---|---|
| Family dynamics | Problems with parents/guardians<br>Conflict with family/household rules<br>Blended/extended family<br>Separation/divorce<br>Custody<br>Problem with siblings<br>Teen parenting<br>Death of friend / family member<br>Move |
| Mental health issues of the youth | Depression<br>Crime Victim/Witness<br>Psychological/behavioral problem<br>Eating disorder<br>Self-injury |
| Mental health issues of friends or family members | Psychological/behavioral problem |
| Suicidality of the youth | Youth suicidal<br>Youth prior suicide attempt |
| Suicidality of friends or family members | Friend/family member suicidal |
| Alcohol or drug use by the youth | Alcohol or drug use (general) |
| Alcohol or drug use by family members | Alcohol or drug use (general) |
| Alcohol or drug use by friends or peers | Alcohol or drug use (general) |
| Involvement of youth or family member in substance abuse treatment program | Youth or family member in S.A. treatment (general) |
| Physical health issues of the youth | HIV/AIDS<br>Pregnancy<br>Physically challenged<br>Illness (general) |
| Physical health issues of family members | Illness (general) |
| Physical abuse or assault | By parent<br>By parent's partner/stepparent<br>By other family member<br>Domestic violence<br>By boyfriend/girlfriend<br>By non-relative |
| Physical abuse or assault perpetrated by the youth | Youth physically assaulting others |
| Sexual abuse or assault | By parent<br>By parent's partner/stepparent<br>By other family member<br>Rape<br>By boyfriend/girlfriend<br>By non-relative |
| Sexual abuse or assault perpetrated by the youth | Youth sexually assaulting others |
| Neglect | Neglect (general) |
| Emotional or verbal abuse | Emotional or verbal abuse (general) |
| Involvement of the youth in the judicial system | Probation/parole<br>Crime involvement |
| Involvement of family members in the judicial system | Family member in jail |

APPENDIX A

General Categories and Subcategories of Crisis Issues Recorded in National Runaway Switchboard Call Logs for Youth Crisis Callers, 2000–2005.

| General Category | Subcategories |
|---|---|
| Economic issues | Poverty |
| | General employment issues |
| | Unemployed |
| | Underemployed |
| | Lost job due to housing issue |
| | Lack of affordable housing |
| Problems with youth or family services | Protective service agency (CPS, DYFS, etc.) |
| | Residential/foster/group home |
| | Runaway shelter |
| | Transitional/independent living |
| | Lack of available services |
| Peer or social issues | Problems involving friends or acquaintances |
| | Problems involving relationship |
| | Gang issues |
| | Cult involvement |
| | Adventure/independence |
| | Internet relationship |
| | Bullying |
| School or education issues | Grades |
| | Truancy (skipping school) |
| | Suspension/expulsion |
| | Dropping out |
| | Problems with teachers |
| | Problems with other students |
| | Home schooling |
| | Enrollment issues |
| Issues related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning (GLBTQ) status | Verbal/physical abuse |
| | Harassment |
| | Coming out |
| | Sexual identity |
| | Questioning |
| Issues related to transportation | Lack of transportation |
| | Youth is stranded |
| | Youth is stranded by sales crew |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Runaways | | Throwaways | | Homeless | |
| | (*N*=30,266) | | (*N*=11,299) | | (*N*=1,598) | | (*N* =1,968) | |
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Family dynamics | 22508 | (74.4%) | 9016 | (79.8%) | 1459 | (91.3%) | 1165 | (59.2%) |
| Problems with parents/guardians | 17635 | (58.3%) | 7024 | (62.2%) | 1248 | (78.1%) | 825 | (41.9%) |
| Conflict with family or household rules | 9652 | (31.9%) | 4497 | (39.8%) | 572 | (35.8%) | 361 | (18.3%) |
| Blended/extended family | 3501 | (11.6%) | 1328 | (11.8%) | 214 | (13.4%) | 161 | (8.2%) |
| Separation/divorce | 3700 | (12.2%) | 1484 | (13.1%) | 179 | (11.2%) | 81 | (4.1%) |
| Custody | 2153 | (7.1%) | 902 | (8.0%) | 130 | (8.1%) | 63 | (3.2%) |
| Problem with siblings | 2261 | (7.5%) | 665 | (5.9%) | 98 | (6.1%) | 81 | (4.1%) |
| Teen parenting | 1566 | (5.2%) | 414 | (3.7%) | 125 | (7.8%) | 175 | (8.9%) |
| Death of friend / family member | 862 | (2.8%) | 291 | (2.6%) | 37 | (2.3%) | 78 | (4.0%) |
| Move | 1307 | (4.3%) | 367 | (3.2%) | 55 | (3.4%) | 132 | (6.7%) |
| Mental health issues of the youth | 3741 | (12.4%) | 940 | (8.3%) | 74 | (4.6%) | 105 | (5.3%) |
| Depression | 2763 | (9.1%) | 554 | (4.9%) | 53 | (3.3%) | 58 | (2.9%) |
| Crime victim/witness | 180 | (0.6%) | 65 | (0.6%) | 5 | (0.3%) | 11 | (0.6%) |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Runaways | | Throwaways | | Homeless | |
| | (*N*=30,266) | | (*N*=11,299) | | (*N*=1,598) | | (*N* =1,968) | |
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Psychological/behavioral problem | 1281 | (4.2%) | 433 | (3.8%) | 27 | (1.7%) | 53 | (2.7%) |
| Eating disorder | 179 | (0.6%) | 16 | (0.1%) | 2 | (0.1%) | 2 | (0.1%) |
| Self-injury | 30 | (0.1%) | 4 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (0.1%) | 0 | (0.0%) |
| Suicidality of the youth | 1204 | (4.0%) | 232 | (2.1%) | 21 | (1.3%) | 16 | (0.8%) |
| Youth suicidal | 1194 | (3.9%) | 230 | (2.0%) | 21 | (1.3%) | 16 | (0.8%) |
| Youth prior suicide attempt | 1173 | (3.9%) | 226 | (2.0%) | 19 | (1.2%) | 16 | (0.8%) |
| Mental health issues of friends/family | 719 | (2.4%) | 244 | (2.2%) | 41 | (2.6%) | 25 | (1.3%) |
| Psychological/behavioral problem | | (same as above) | | (same as above) | | (same as above) | | (same as above) |
| Suicidality of friends/family | 152 | (0.5%) | 32 | (0.3%) | 1 | (0.1%) | 2 | (0.1%) |
| Friend/family member suicidal | | (same as above) | | (same as above) | | (same as above) | | (same as above) |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Runaways | | Throwaways | | Homeless | |
| | (*N*=30,266) | | (*N*=11,299) | | (*N*=1,598) | | (*N* =1,968) | |
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Peer or social issues | 8459 | (27.9%) | 3508 | (31.0%) | 212 | (13.3%) | 474 | (24.1%) |
| Friends/acquaintance problems | 3316 | (11.0%) | 1224 | (10.8%) | 87 | (5.4%) | 160 | (8.1%) |
| Relationship problems | 3615 | (11.9%) | 1240 | (11.0%) | 84 | (5.3%) | 196 | (10.0%) |
| Gang issues | 195 | (0.6%) | 79 | (0.7%) | 9 | (0.6%) | 10 | (0.5%) |
| Cult involvement | 17 | (0.1%) | 3 | (Non-significant) | 0 | (0.0%) | 1 | (0.1%) |
| Adventure/independence | 3732 | (12.3%) | 2150 | (19.0%) | 81 | (5.1%) | 236 | (12.0%) |
| Internet relationship | 3649 | (12.1%) | 2115 | (18.7%) | 79 | (4.9%) | 234 | (11.9%) |
| Bullying | 9 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (Non-significant) | 0 | (0.0%) | 0 | (0.0%) |
| School or education issues | 4231 | (14.0%) | 1918 | (17.0%) | 177 | (11.1%) | 154 | (7.8%) |
| Grades | 1567 | (5.2%) | 500 | (4.4%) | 38 | (2.4%) | 9 | (0.5%) |
| Truancy (skipping school) | 1024 | (3.4%) | 622 | (5.5%) | 53 | (3.3%) | 8 | (0.4%) |
| Suspension/expulsion | 483 | (1.6%) | 212 | (1.9%) | 16 | (1.0%) | 9 | (0.5%) |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Runaways | | Throwaways | | Homeless | |
| | (*N*=30,266) | | (*N*=11,299) | | (*N*=1,598) | | (*N* =1,968) | |
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Dropping out | 1499 | (5.0%) | 836 | (7.4%) | 88 | (5.5%) | 130 | (6.6%) |
| Problems with teachers | 503 | (1.7%) | 140 | (1.2%) | 8 | (0.5%) | 5 | (0.3%) |
| Problems with other students | 26 | (0.1%) | 3 | (Non-significant) | 0 | (0.0%) | 1 | (0.1%) |
| Home schooling | 4 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (Non-significant) | 0 | (0.0%) | 0 | (0.0%) |
| Enrollment issues | 23 | (0.1%) | 8 | (0.1%) | 1 | (0.1%) | 1 | (0.1%) |
| Economic issues | 1022 | (3.4%) | 318 | (2.8%) | 63 | (3.9%) | 214 | (10.9%) |
| Poverty | 912 | (3.0%) | 294 | (2.6%) | 59 | (3.7%) | 185 | (9.4%) |
| General employment issues | 48 | (0.2%) | 11 | (0.1%) | 3 | (0.2%) | 3 | (0.2%) |
| Unemployed | 56 | (0.2%) | 16 | (0.1%) | 5 | (0.3%) | 14 | (0.7%) |
| Underemployed | 13 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (Non-significant) | 0 | (0.0%) | 1 | (0.1%) |
| Lost job due to housing issue | 6 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (0.1%) | 0 | (0.0%) |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) (*N*=30,266) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Runaways (*N*=11,299) | | Throwaways (*N*=1,598) | | Homeless (*N* =1,968) | |
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Lack of affordable housing | 55 | (0.2%) | 7 | (0.1%) | 1 | (0.1%) | 26 | (1.3%) |
| Physical health of the youth | 2245 | (7.4%) | 678 | (6.0%) | 98 | (6.1%) | 164 | (8.3%) |
| HIV/AIDS | 133 | (0.4%) | 27 | (0.2%) | 3 | (0.2%) | 5 | (0.3%) |
| Pregnancy | 1620 | (5.4%) | 501 | (4.4%) | 80 | (5.0%) | 120 | (6.1%) |
| Physically challenged | 63 | (0.2%) | 17 | (0.2%) | 1 | (0.1%) | 6 | (0.3%) |
| Illness (general) | 498 | (1.6%) | 148 | (1.3%) | 16 | (1.0%) | 38 | (1.9%) |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Runaways | | Throwaways | | Homeless | |
| | (*N*=30,266) | | (*N*=11,299) | | (*N*=1,598) | | (*N* =1,968) | |
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Physical health of the family | 493 | (1.6%) | 147 | (1.3%) | 16 | (1.0%) | 36 | (1.8%) |
| Illness (general) | (same as above) | | (same as above) | | (same as above) | | (same as above) | |
| Issues related to GLBTQ status | 845 | (2.8%) | 178 | (1.6%) | 45 | (2.8%) | 50 | (2.5%) |
| Verbal/physical abuse | (No data available) | | (No data available) | | (No data available) | | (No data available) | |
| Harassment | 222 | (0.7%) | 52 | (0.5%) | 9 | (0.6%) | 18 | (0.9%) |
| Coming out | 520 | (1.7%) | 120 | (1.1%) | 39 | (2.4%) | 24 | (1.2%) |
| Sexual identity | 487 | (1.6%) | 89 | (0.8%) | 21 | (1.3%) | 27 | (1.4%) |
| Questioning | 6 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (Non-significant) | 0 | (0.0%) | 0 | (0.0%) |
| Alcohol/drug use by the youth (general) | 1557 | (5.1%) | 756 | (6.7%) | 65 | (4.1%) | 75 | (3.8%) |
| Alcohol/drug use by friends/peers (general) | 362 | (1.2%) | 135 | (1.2%) | 16 | (1.0%) | 17 | (0.9%) |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Runaways | | Throwaways | | Homeless | |
| | (*N*=30,266) | | (*N*=11,299) | | (*N*=1,598) | | (*N* =1,968) | |
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Alcohol/drug use by family (general) | 1752 | (5.8%) | 682 | (6.0%) | 96 | (6.0%) | 77 | (3.9%) |
| Youth/family member in substance abuse treatment program (general) | 119 | (0.4%) | 53 | (0.5%) | 7 | (0.4%) | 10 | (0.5%) |
| Physical abuse/assault | 4799 | (15.9%) | 2142 | (19.0%) | 221 | (13.8%) | 132 | (6.7%) |
| By parent | 3404 | (11.2%) | 1584 | (14.0%) | 185 | (11.6%) | 48 | (2.4%) |
| By parent's partner/stepparent | 827 | (2.7%) | 413 | (3.7%) | 31 | (1.9%) | 12 | (0.6%) |
| By other family member | 451 | (1.5%) | 172 | (1.5%) | 18 | (1.1%) | 8 | (0.4%) |
| Domestic violence | 528 | (1.7%) | 178 | (1.6%) | 9 | (0.6%) | 41 | (2.1%) |
| By boyfriend/girlfriend | 376 | (1.2%) | 126 | (1.1%) | 6 | (0.4%) | 43 | (2.2%) |
| By non-relative | 5 | (Non-significant) | 3 | (Non-significant) | 0 | (0.0%) | 0 | (0.0%) |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Runaways | | Throwaways | | Homeless | |
| | (*N*=30,266) | | (*N*=11,299) | | (*N*=1,598) | | (*N* =1,968) | |
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Physical abuse or assault perpetrated by the youth (general) | 165 | (0.5%) | 59 | (0.5%) | 9 | (0.6%) | 7 | (0.4%) |
| Sexual abuse or assault | 1400 | (4.6%) | 560 | (5.0%) | 36 | (2.3%) | 38 | (1.9%) |
| By parent | 414 | (1.4%) | 182 | (1.6%) | 10 | (0.6%) | 3 | (0.2%) |
| By parent's partner/stepparent | 339 | (1.1%) | 155 | (1.4%) | 11 | (0.7%) | 5 | (0.3%) |
| By other family member | 239 | (0.8%) | 78 | (0.7%) | 5 | (0.3%) | 4 | (0.2%) |
| By boyfriend/girlfriend | 109 | (0.4%) | 35 | (0.3%) | 1 | (0.1%) | 5 | (0.3%) |
| By non-relative | 11 | (Non-significant) | 2 | (Non-significant) | 0 | (0.0%) | 1 | (0.1%) |
| Rape | 460 | (1.5%) | 170 | (1.5%) | 11 | (0.7%) | 22 | (1.1%) |
| Sexual abuse or assault perpetrated by the youth (general) | 26 | (0.1%) | 8 | (0.1%) | 2 | (0.1%) | 1 | (0.1%) |
| Neglect (general) | 1849 | (6.1%) | 571 | (5.1%) | 393 | (24.6%) | 86 | (4.4%) |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Runaways | | Throwaways | | Homeless | |
| | (*N*=30,266) | | (*N*=11,299) | | (*N*=1,598) | | (*N* =1,968) | |
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Emotional or verbal abuse (general) | 3228 | (10.7%) | 1151 | (10.2%) | 190 | (11.9%) | 60 | (3.0%) |
| Involvement of the youth in judicial system | 1374 | (4.5%) | 826 | (7.3%) | 50 | (3.1%) | 62 | (3.2%) |
| Probation/parole | 828 | (2.7%) | 528 | (4.7%) | 30 | (1.9%) | 20 | (1.0%) |
| Crime involvement | 746 | (2.5%) | 430 | (3.8%) | 28 | (1.8%) | 51 | (2.6%) |
| Involvement of family in judicial system | 392 | (1.3%) | 175 | (1.5%) | 18 | (1.1%) | 31 | (1.6%) |
| Family member in jail | | (same as above) | | (same as above) | | (same as above) | | (same as above) |
| Problems with youth or family services | 6359 | (21.0%) | 2927 | (25.9%) | 509 | (31.9%) | 438 | (22.3%) |
| Protective service agency (CPS, DYFS, etc.) | 2649 | (8.8%) | 1215 | (10.8%) | 236 | (14.8%) | 59 | (3.0%) |
| Residential/foster/group home | 2102 | (6.9%) | 971 | (8.6%) | 159 | (9.9%) | 130 | (6.6%) |
| Runaway shelter | 3707 | (12.2%) | 1729 | (15.3%) | 341 | (21.3%) | 345 | (17.5%) |
| Transitional/independent living | 5 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (0.1%) | 0 | (0.0%) |

**APPENDIX B**

**Frequency Analysis Results for General Categories and Subcategories of Risk Issues Reported by Youth Crisis Callers to the National Runaway Switchboard, 2000–2005.**

| | Total Sample (Street and Non-Street Youth) (*N*=30,266) | | Street Youth Subgroup Status: Runaways (*N*=11,299) | | Throwaways (*N*=1,598) | | Homeless (*N* =1,968) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **General categories and subcategories** | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) | *n* | ( Percent) |
| Lack of available services | 33 | (0.1%) | 15 | (0.1%) | 1 | (0.1%) | 4 | (0.2%) |
| Issues related to transportation | 3246 | (10.7%) | 2036 | (18.0%) | 95 | (5.9%) | 373 | (19.0%) |
| Lack of transportation | 3210 | (10.6%) | 2022 | (17.9%) | 94 | (5.9%) | 370 | (18.8%) |
| Youth is stranded | 47 | (0.2%) | 24 | (0.2%) | 2 | (0.1%) | 7 | (0.4%) |
| Youth is stranded by sales crew | 13 | (Non-significant) | 1 | (Non-significant) | 0 | (0.0%) | 1 | (0.1%) |

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