

San Jose At-A-Glance

Homeless Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey

Report written by Robin Petering, MSW

Introduction

Researchers interested in understanding the needs and strengths of young people experiencing homelessness typically rely, out of necessity, on rather small localized samples, limiting their ability to understand the full range of experiences of young people nationally. Further very little is understood about the actual lives and experiences of these young people. To fully address youth homelessness, a comprehensive and up to date understanding of the behaviors, demographics, experiences, and sources of resiliency is necessary. To address this need, the Homeless Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (HYRRS) was developed. The HYRRS is an assessment tool that provides in depth detail on experiences of young people that will provide insight into differences and similarities across cities and communities.

The current report reflects the current landscape of youth homelessness San Jose, CA.

A sample of 208 unique homeless or unstably housed youth (aged 18-25) were recruited in the winter of 2017 from service agencies in San Jose, CA All youth accessing services during the data collection period were asked to participate and went through the informed consent process with a research assistant with the caveats that child abuse and suicidal and homicidal intentions would be reported.

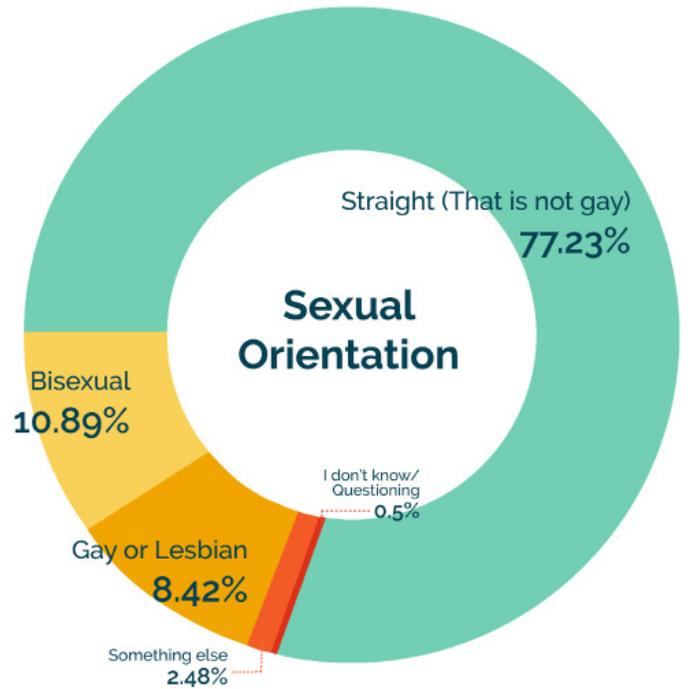
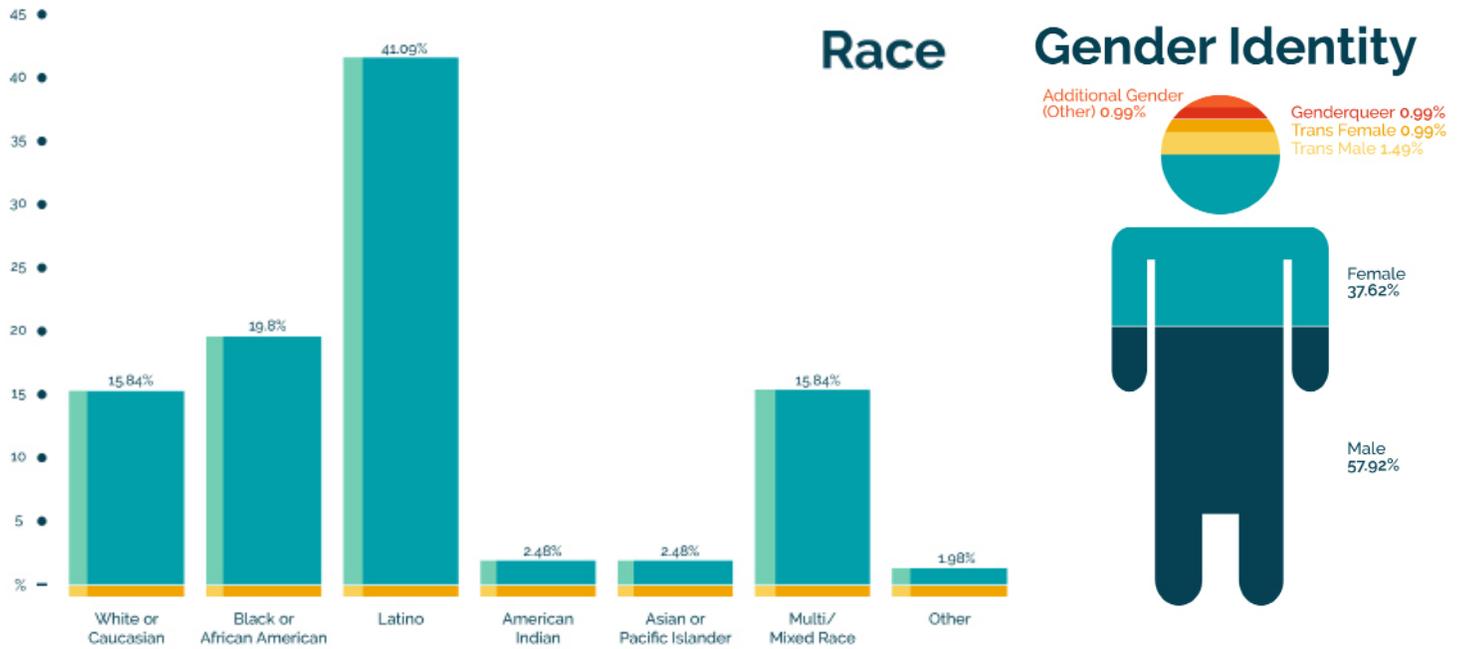
The study consisted of two parts: a self-administered main survey and a self-administered social network survey (SNS). Research assistants and staff were available at all times while the young person was completing the survey to answer any questions as they came up or resolve any technical issues. However, the survey was designed to be fully self-administered if necessary. The main survey took an average of 57.4 minutes to complete while the SNS took an average of 18.4 minutes to complete. The Institutional Review Board of Southern California approved all procedures and surveys. Similar procedures were completed in Phoenix, Denver, Houston, St. Louis, New York and San Jose.

HYRRS Multi-City Assesment



Results

How Would You Describe Yourself?



Average Age
21

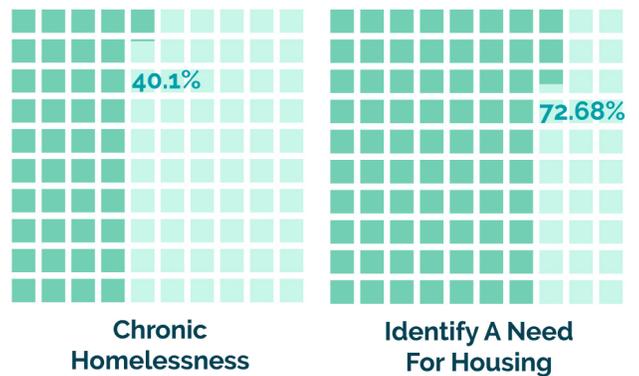
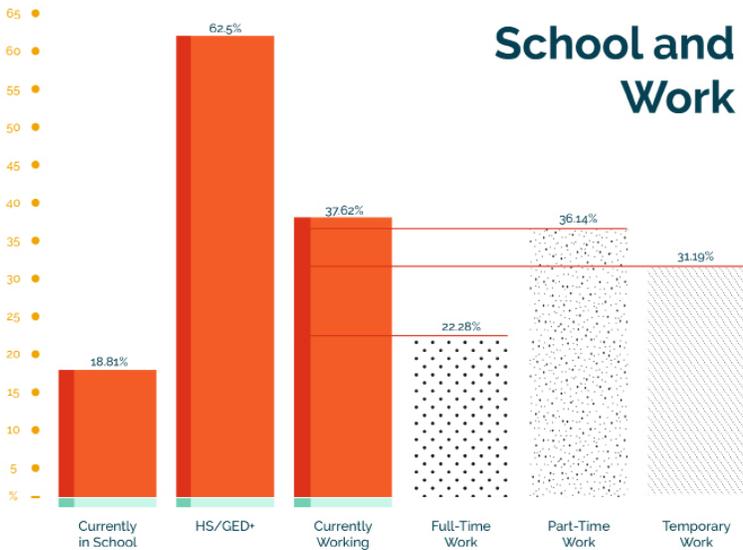
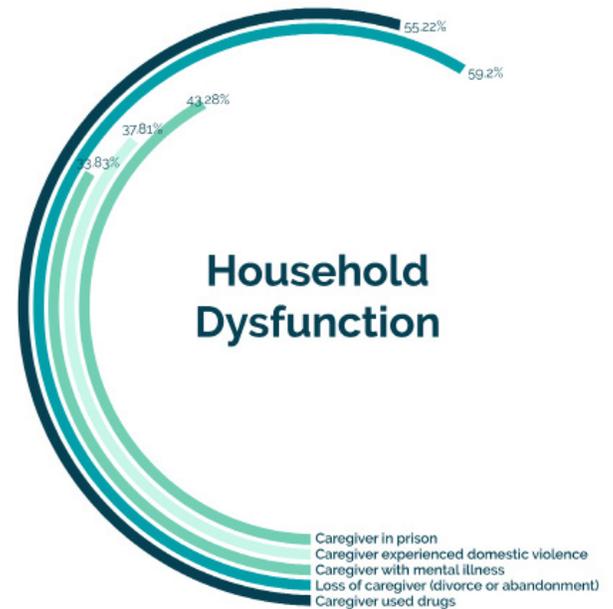
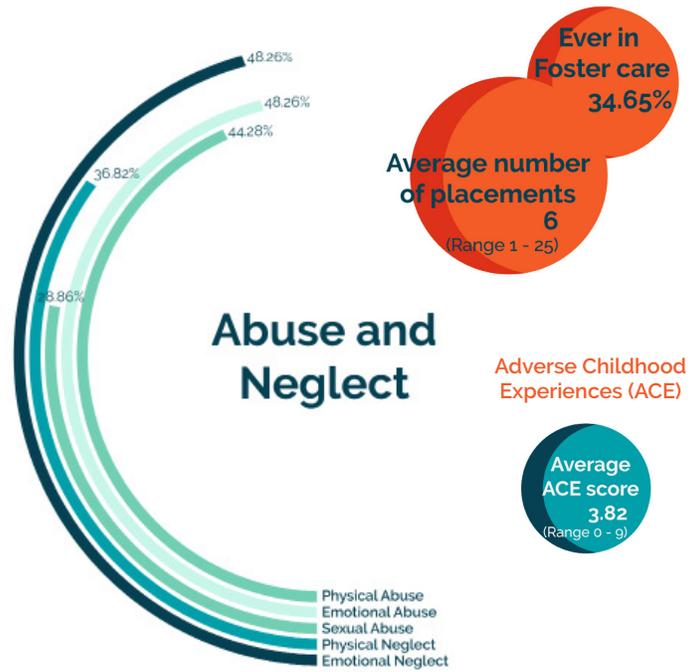
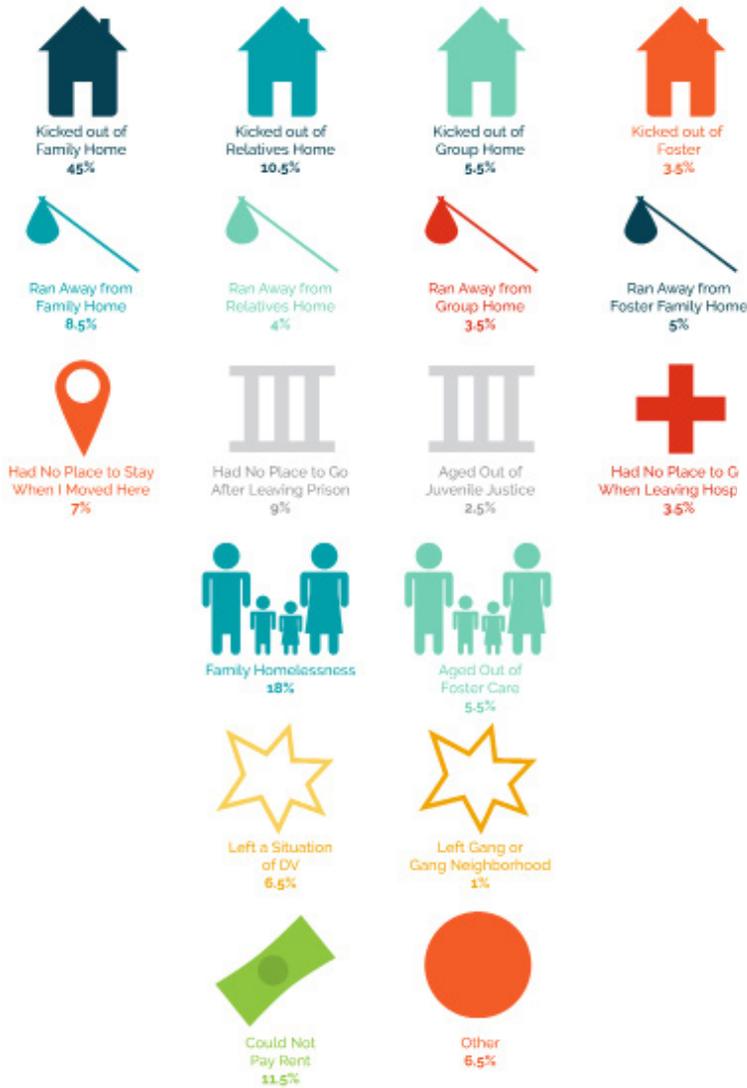
Number of those from CA
29.7%

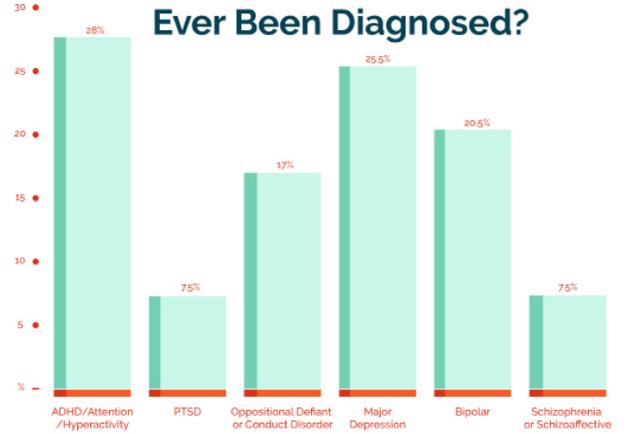
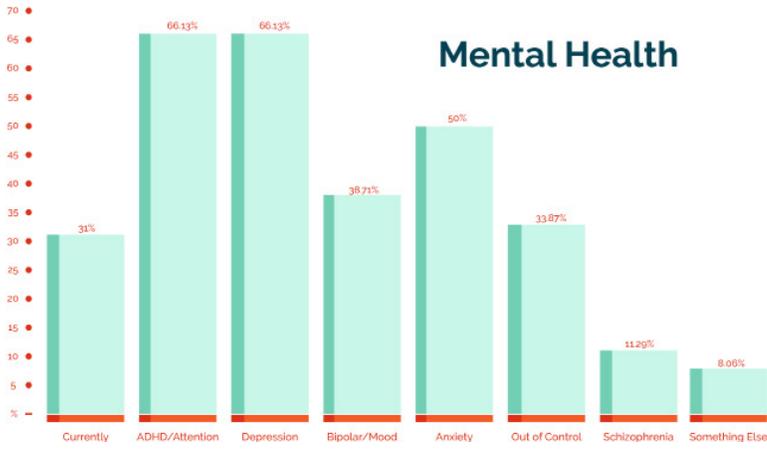
Average Number of Moves
5
(Range 0 - 30)

Has Children
25.49%

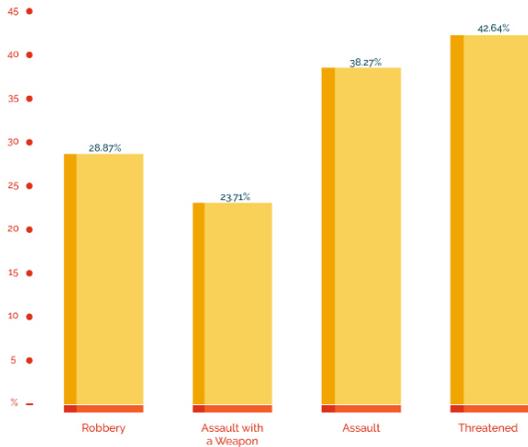
Children Living With Them
10.89%

Reasons for Homelessness

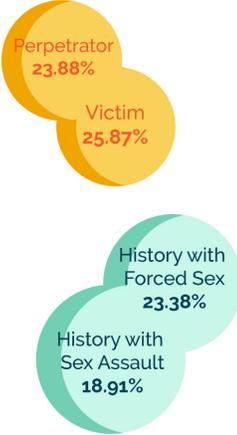




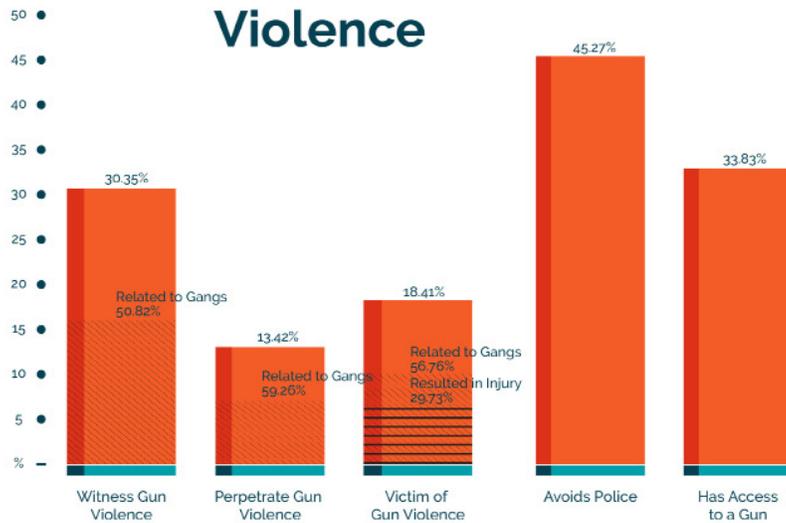
Victimization While Homeless



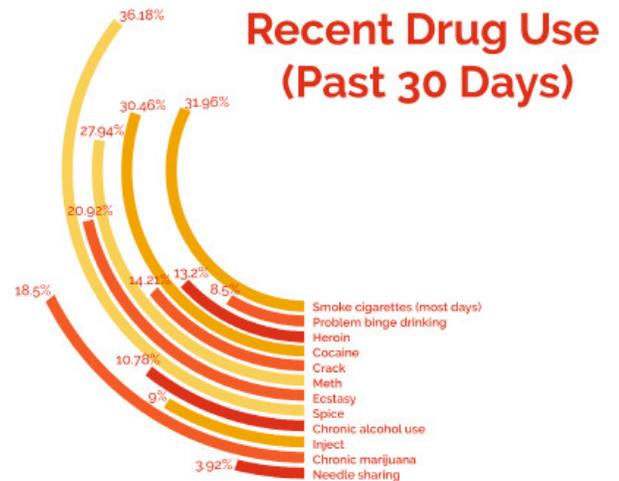
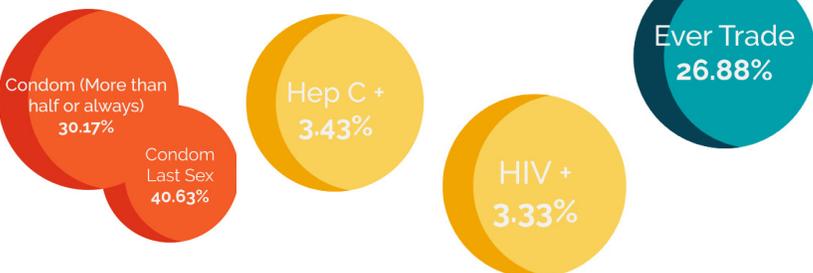
Intimate Partner Violence



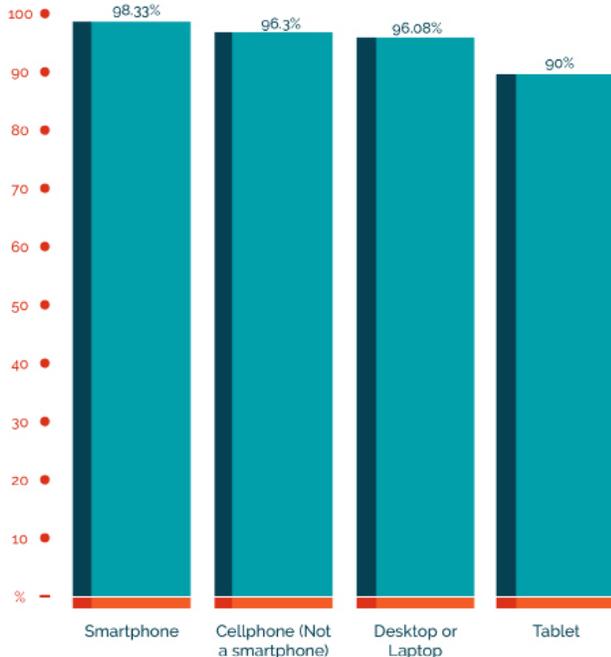
Violence



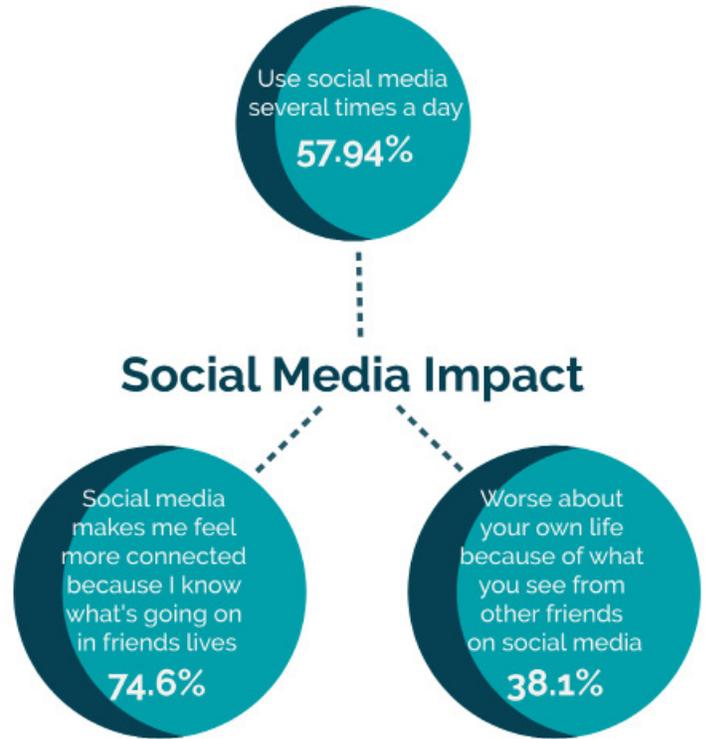
Sexual Activity



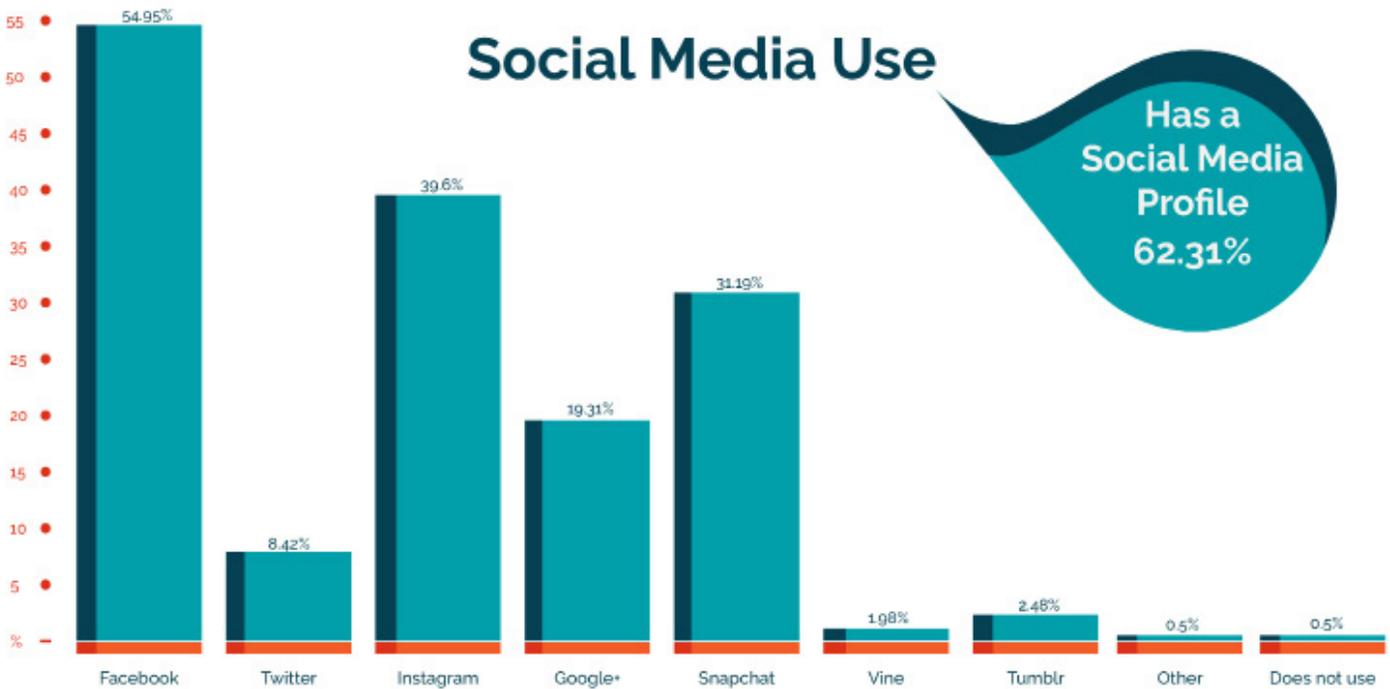
Technology Access



Social Media Impact



Social Media Use



Lessons learned, challenges and future directions

With any large-scale research project, comes challenges and opportunities to grow. One of the earliest challenges, was designing the HYRRS survey instrument itself. From the beginning, investigators aimed to create a comprehensive instrument but also prioritized limiting the survey length. Limiting survey length was important for participant buy-in, understanding that young people have a variety of features that may make completing a computer-based survey difficult including lack of sleep, vision issues, distrust of research. Reducing survey burden was a priority, however, as a result some items were not included such as extended mental health scales and military status. Additionally, there were differences in time and efforts for data collection because each participating city and corresponding service environment varied. In San Jose, the population of young persons accessing services frequently had never had an opportunity to participate in research services until this point. This most likely led to some differences in reporting (i.e. possibly under reporting) as a result of distrust and skepticism of researchers. However, it is imperative to continue future collaborations with Community Based Research Partners to collect representative, unbiased data which can be used to include “youth voice” in future policy and programming decisions. It should be noted that the sample included was a convenience sample. Although the investigators believe that the samples accurately reflect the larger population of homeless youth in each city based on research that states that a large proportion of homeless youth populations access drop-in centers, it is possible that certain sub populations may be underrepresented in the sample. Future directions with the HYRRS protocol would be to refine sampling methodology to look more closely like a random sampling methodology.

Going forward HYRRS seeks to expand the number of cities and service environments included and expanding the HYRRS collective. Efforts will be made to continue to refine the HYRRS instrument. Another future priority will be to reduce the community feedback loop and creating efficient pathways for reporting research results back to service providers and other forms of dissemination as well as incorporating discussion into the next phase of the HYRRS project.

Correspondence:

[Robin Petering, MSW](mailto:Robin.Petering@usc.edu)

petering@usc.edu

[@robinpetering](https://twitter.com/robinpetering)

Acknowledgments: Bill Wilson Center
Drop-In Center Staff, The HYRRS San
Jose Data Team: Mary Hemler & Laura
Onasch-Vera.

