

Street Involved Youth and Companion Animals:
A Phenomenological Study

Melissa Caines

Mount Saint Vincent University

A thesis submitted to the Department of Child & Youth Study
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Masters of Arts (Child & Youth Study)

August 2016

Copyright Melissa Caines

*“He’s like always been my emotional support,
so if I need a shoulder to cry on,
he’s there.”*

(Youth remarking on her dog)

ABSTRACT

Of the approximate one hundred and fifty thousand youth in Canada who are homeless on any given night as many as 25 percent of them share their lives with companion animals (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006) . For many of these young people their companion animal is their only source of family and their pets provide many benefits to them including emotional, physical, and psychological support. Despite these benefits companion animals also present youth experiencing homelessness with negative consequences, such as being rejected from or refused service options, including shelters, employment agencies, and social services. In spite of these drawbacks research on homeless youth report that they continuously opt to stay with their pets instead of accessing such services (Lem et al., 2013)

Six youth between the ages of 16-24 years and who utilized the services of ARK Outreach, were interviewed for the purpose of exploring the experiences of homeless youth with companion animals in Halifax from their own perspective. The interviews focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the roles and relationships between homeless youth and their pets. Moustakas (1994) transcendental phenomenological approach was used in data analysis to identify and discuss six themes that developed, including emotional support, protection and safety, responsibility and motivation, unfair treatment and persecution, challenges, and solutions. In conclusion, three areas in need of further investigation are outlined.

Dedicated to Sally Brown, the second; my furry childhood best friend, the one who changed the way I see everything.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my family, husband Rob, and sons, Liam and Nate, for your endless patience with Mommy so often being busy with school work. To my parents, Sandy and George Caines; you have always believed in me, and through that I have always believed anything is possible.

Thank you to Dr. Ardra Cole, my supervisor, who shares my passion and dedication to companion animals and, luckily for me, has endless patience. Thank you also to Kelly Shaw and Dr. Joan Turner, my support team, who understand my vision.

And a special thank you to Dorothy, Emily, and the youth from ARK Outreach; without your vital contributions this study would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: THE OVERTURE

The Willow Tree Example	07
Preamble	09
Appraisal of the Current Literature	13

CHAPTER 2: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Methodology and Methods	25
Data Analysis	30

CHAPTER 3: THE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR EXPERIENCE

Presentation of the Participants	34
Youth Statements	36

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THEMES AND EVIDENCE

Themes	39
Emotional Support	39
Responsibility and motivation	43
Protection and safety	45
Challenges	47
Unfair Treatment and Persecution	49
Solutions	51
Impressions of Themes	53
Meaning Making	55
Unified Statement of the phenomenon	67

CHAPTER 5: NEXT STEPS

Next Steps in Research	69
------------------------	----

Public Transportation	70
Housing	72
Service Animal Identification	73
My Next Steps	73
The Willow Tree Concluded	74
REFERENCES	97
TABLES AND DIAGRAMS	
Table 1: Significant Statements	86
Table 2: Selected Significant Statements	96
Table 3: Summary of Selected Significant Statements	37
Table 4: Themes and Evidence	38
Diagram 1: Levels of Influence	56
Diagram 2: Cost/Benefit Analysis	66
Diagram 3: Research Development	69
APPENDICES	
Appendix I: Recruitment Sheet	101
Appendix II: Verbal Consent Form	103
Appendix III: Interview Schedule	104
Appendix IV: Resource Pamphlet	106

CHAPTER 1: THE OVERTURE

The Willow Tree

Carpooling from Spring Garden Road to a work function at The Atlantica Hotel, four colleagues approach the Willow Tree intersection from Robie Street. The busy five-way intersection, named for the tree, gruesomely rumoured to be a hanging tree that once grew in the median, hosts a variety of travelling and transient youth. As the grey sedan slowly comes to a stop at the red light behind a short line up of cars the driver, Dale, spots a group of youth standing in the median beside them. "Oh great, roll up your windows" he directs the other three passengers. "What, why?" asks the woman sitting in the front seat next to him. "Look! A couple of squeegee kids begging for money! You want to talk to them?" he responds. "No, thank you!" replies Martha as she begins to roll up her window.

Standing on the grass median between the traffic lanes are two youth, although it is hard to say, they look to be about eighteen to twenty years old. It is a warm spring afternoon and the male is wearing shorts and t-shirt, his face hidden by a scruffy beard. In one hand he holds a small bucket of dirty water and a much worn squeegee, offering to clean windshields in exchange for whatever coins the drivers' offer. I will call this young man Tony; he begins to talk animatedly with the young woman who is wearing a faded and torn turquoise dress and combat boots, her dreaded brown hair tied back with a piece of nylon cord, I will call her Eliza. Beside the couple is a black and brown dog about the size of a Labrador Retriever, his coat glistening in the sunshine. He pants softly as he gazes up at them, never taking his eyes off of Eliza; his devotion to her obvious. As the young man

walks away, Eliza lovingly strokes the dogs' ear, then bends down and whispers something into it. The dog, furiously wagging his tail, begins to lick the girls face and she breaks into laughter. Any indication of the sadness there just moments ago now erased.

The light turns green and the gray sedan follows the line of traffic turning onto Quinpool Road. "That's ridiculous!" comments Kevin from the backseat of the car as it passes the youth experiencing homelessness. "What now?" asks Sam who is sharing the backseat with him. "That girl shouldn't have a dog, she can't even take care of herself!" replies Kevin. "I totally agree" Martha concurs, "I just read an article about this... ". Before she can continue however, Sam breaks in. "Let's not judge others so harshly, shall we? It looks to me as if that girl really needs that dog." The car is suddenly quiet and then Martha retorts, "But really that dog should be in a home that can properly care for it". "You know", explained Sam, "that dog is probably her only companion, the only creature she can trust. And usually street kids will feed their dogs before themselves and sleep outside so they can be together. Don't be so ignorant!"

Although this is a fictitious depiction, it is based on real situations and is representative of typical exchanges between youth experiencing homelessness, their companion animals, and the general public. Young people experiencing homelessness and their companion animals, usually dogs, although I have met a few with other types of animals, are visible all over Halifax, but particularly in busy commercial areas such as the Willow Tree and Connaught Avenue. Over the years I have passed these intersections and wondered about these young people and their companion animals many times; and I have witnessed the musings of others, similar to the one I describe in the scenario.

The visibility of street involved youth and their companion animals makes it impossible for them to conceal themselves from the general public and it appears that society holds a wide range of passionate opinions on the subject. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of street involved youth with companion animals in Halifax, Nova Scotia from the perspective of the youth. It is intended to focus on gaining an in-depth understanding of the roles and relationships between the youth and their companion animals and the needs and challenges that exist for them. Through the current study, I aspire to review the current literature on the subject, gain an in-depth understanding of the subject through direct interviews with street involved youth, and then share their voices. Finally, I will discuss what ‘next steps’ could be pursued in order to gain an even deeper understanding of this important relationship and to help improve the lives of street involved youth and their companion animals.

Preamble

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) defines the human animal bond as a mutually beneficial and vibrant relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors that are crucial to the health and well-being of both. (AVMA, 2016). Until recently the significance of this bond and the impact these relationships have on people’s lives has been relegated to the back pages of obscure periodicals. Until recently the topic has generally been met with skepticism by academics and the general population alike (Just ask Boris Levinson, often considered the ‘grandfather’ of animal-assisted interventions, about the ridicule he received from his colleagues when he presented his findings on what he termed Animal-Assisted Psychotherapy to the American Psychological

Association in 1961! (Lacoff, 2000)). Today, however, the human animal bond is gaining mainstream attention and research is yielding some significant and revealing results. One of those being the value and power of the relationship between people and their companion animals.

Take for example the numerous organizations devoted to the subject, (e.g. The Association for Human Animal Bond Studies, The American Association of Human Animal Bond Veterinarians, and The Centre for the Human Animal Bond); or scholar's whose academic work is focused on the topic (Levinson, 1965; Mallon, 1993; Melson, 2003); and the bookstore walls that are lined with popular reads regarding the human animal bond, such as Dewey's Nine Lives (Myron & Witter, 2010) and Making the Rounds with Oscar (Dosa, 2009) and toms with a more academic tone, such as Made for Each Other: The Biology of the Human Animal Bond (Daley Olmert, 2009). In fact, TIME magazine released a special edition in April 2016 entitled Animals & Your Health: The Power of Pets to Heal our Pain, Help us Cope, and Improve our Well-being. This magazine edition reflects on several of the themes connected with sharing our lives with companion animals; topics covered include assistance and emotional-support animals, the science behind animal healing, equine therapy, and canine support for soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Society's growing interest in the human animal bond is evident and the amount of information available in mainstream media reflects this, but the same cannot be said of this same bond between youth experiencing homelessness and their companion animals.

Although information regarding the intense bond between street involved youth and their companion animals is limited, there appears to have been a rise in interest in the topic. In March, two articles based on the intense connection between homeless people and their pets were printed in popular publications. The first, reported in the Herald News, an article on research, conducted by Michelle Lem, in which she reports that “homeless youth with pets less likely to be depressed, use hard drugs” (Lem et al., 2016, page 1). The second, originally published by the Canadian Press (Szklański, 2016), reported on a documentary film, entitled A Dog’s Life (Choquette, 2015), focuses on homeless people and their pets and explores the support and inspiration given by companion animals to their owners. These articles detail the value of the relationship between homeless people and their companion animals, the challenges that are associated with being a homeless pet owner, and discuss approaches to reducing those challenges. Both publications highlight the approaching shift in thought society has been working toward in recent years regarding the benefits of the human animal bond, especially for those experiencing homelessness. Given that an estimated 150,000 youth in Canada are homeless on any particular night and that as many as 25 percent of them have a pet(s) (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006), and that research in this area is relatively new, this meaningful issue is worthy of further scrutiny.

Companion animals, also known as pets, have been shown to contribute to healthy social, emotional, and physiological development in the general population, and in particular for young people (Friedmann & Son, 2009; Levinson, 1965; Mallon, 1994; Odendaal, 2000). The human-animal bond has been shown to be even stronger amongst the homeless pet-owning population and to provide major benefits to them; such as

companionship and unconditional love, stability and responsibility, and safety and protection (Lem et al., 2013; Rew, 2000; Rhoades et al., 2014). Despite the fact that pets, predominantly dogs, have been identified by street involved youth as extremely important to their lives (Thompson et al., 2006), pet ownership also may have specific challenges (Kid & Kid, 1994; Lem et al., 2013). Studies have shown that youth who are experiencing homelessness and who have pets are consistently rejected from or refuse service options, such as housing or employment services, because their animals are not permitted (Lem et al., 2016; Singer et al., 1995). These youth also reported that vocation options are very limited because they have no one to leave their pets with while pursuing education or employment. (Singer et al., 1995). In fact, in one Canadian study, homeless youth consistently reported opting to stay with their companion animal regardless of the impact this may have on their own health or success (Lem et al., 2013).

As well, many homeless youth adopt the attitude of 'pet before self', which could involve finding food for their pets before themselves or sleeping rough on the streets in order to be with them (Labrecque & Walsh, 2011; Lem et al., 2013; Rhoades et al., 2014; Singer et al., 1995). Associated with the 'pet before self' stance is research that indicates that victims of domestic abuse, most often women and children, will postpone or refuse getting help because they fear for the safety of their beloved pets if they were to leave them at home with the abuser (Ascione, 1998; Flynn, 2000). By offering more 'pet-friendly' housing and service options, youth who are experiencing homelessness with pets could continue to rely on the powerful relationship they have already formed with their pets while obtaining assistance. Unmistakeably this is an argument for service providers to

seek to better understand and support the human-animal bond in the street involved youth population.

Of the limited academic literature on the subject of street involved youth and companion animals, most studies concentrate on youth living in larger urban areas, such as Toronto or Montreal. Smaller Canadian cities, such as Halifax, or rural areas, often lack as many resources as larger cities and can tend to be less progressive. Thus the purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of street involved youth with companion animals in a smaller Canadian city, Halifax, from the perspective of the youth. The investigation will focus on thorough interviews with youth experiencing homelessness who share their lives with companion animals. Through these interviews and using Moustakas (1994) phenomenological analysis process I provide in-depth insight into the roles and relationships between the youth and companion animal(s) and assess the needs and challenges that occur in the lives of homeless pet owning youth in the smaller city of Halifax. I will also report on the suggestions and recommendations of the youth, with the goal of improving the lives of young street involved people with companion animals.

Appraisal of the Current Literature

Companion animals have long since been recognized as having a potentially constructive influence on human functioning (McConnell, 2002) and the recorded use of animals as therapeutic agents dates back to 1699 when John Locke advocated giving children small animals as a means of encouraging feelings of empathy and responsibility (Serpell, 2000). Research which examines young people's interactions with animals demonstrates discernable physiological benefits (Friedman et al, 1983; Odendall, 2000),

emotional benefits and social benefits (Anderson & Olson, 2006; Mallon, 1994; Melson, 2003; Zaslof & Hart, 1999) for anyone bonded with an animal, especially children and youth.

Although research is limited, studies have indicated that companion animals assist street involved youth with an array of social, emotional, and physiological concerns. The lack of significant social supports in the lives of street involved youth leave them vulnerable to social isolation and associated mental health issues, such as loneliness and depression (Rew, 2000). According to a Halifax, Nova Scotia study by Karabanow (2004), the longer youth stay on the streets the worse their mental and physical health, and many street involved youth reported mental health illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Companion animals are a source of friendship and love to youth experiencing homelessness and may combat the social isolation of living on the street. An initial study conducted by Kidd and Kidd (1994) found that 74% of males and 48% of females surveyed identified their pets as their only source of companionship and love. A study of homeless women and their pets conducted in six urban Canadian cities demonstrated that animals provided companionship, unconditional acceptance, and comfort (Labrecque & Walsh, 2011). In an investigation by Rew (2000) companion animals were shown to directly help homeless youth cope with feelings of loneliness and depression. A recent study conducted by Lem and colleagues (Lem, Coe, Haley, Stone, & O'Grady, 2016) interviewed street involved youth with companion animals and found that they were three times less likely to be depressed than those without pets. These studies demonstrate the various ways companion animals provide essential emotional support to those experiencing homelessness, who often have few or no other such supports.

Companion animals also provide physical comfort through a variety of avenues. According to the statistics on homeless and street involved youth in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) (Background Report: Homelessness and Street Involved Youth in HRM, 2005), street youth are at high risk for criminal victimization and many report being robbed or assaulted. In a study by Gaetz (2004) street youth were five times more likely than youth in secure housing to be victims of assault or theft and ten times more likely to be robbed by force or sexually assaulted. Current research indicates that those living on the street or associated with street culture are at a higher risk of criminal victimization and a companion animal, in particular a dog, often acts as a strong protector against such maltreatment (Kidd & Kidd, 1994; Rew, 2000; Taylor, Williams, & Gray, 2004). As well, many street involved youth state that their pets work as social lubricators, causing others to be more likely to talk to them and/or treat them better than if they were encountered without their pets (Kidd & Kidd, 1994; Taylor et al, 2004). And, since homeless pet-owning youth often chose to remain on the street rather than be separated from their companion animals (Lem et al, 2013), many of them are left with no other options than to 'sleep rough' on the streets. Many youth reported, on cold nights, sleeping with their pets as a way to keep a little warmer (Thompson et al, 2005).

Although sharing your life with a companion animals while homeless has been shown to be associated with increased police interference, such as unfair ticketing practices (Gaetz & O'Grady, 2011), these examples from collective literature illustrate that by providing protection, safety, warmth, and assisting with social acceptance pets may help youth experiencing homelessness with the physical stressors of living on the street.

Street youth also have reported that companion animals serve as motivators to them in various manners (Labrecque & Walsh, 2011). In several studies, homeless youth identified taking care of their pets as motivation for them to strive to take better care of themselves and also provided them with a sense of responsibility (Bender et al, 2007; Labrecque & Walsh, 2011; Rew, 2000; Rhoades et al, 2014). It seems that companion animals provide a reason for street involved youth to make prosocial choices, such as refraining from drug use or illegal activity (Taylor et al., 2004; Thompson et al., 2005). Street youth also report avoiding behaviour that would lead to their arrest in order to be able to properly care for their animal (Lem et al., 2013). The results from these studies suggest that the companion animals of street youth provide them with motivation for healthier life choices and this pre-existing human-animal bond could be utilized as an effective means of encouragement and support by service providers.

Research demonstrates that companion animals play a significant role in the healthy social, emotional, and physical health of youth experiencing homelessness and, due to the interdependence of these youth and their pets, they are more attached to their companion animals than youth with secure housing (Singer et al., 1995; Taylor et al., 2004). Since youth experiencing homelessness have usually already suffered several forms of loss in their lives, enforced relinquishment of a pet is extremely difficult and may have severe emotional, physical, and social consequences (Ascione, 1998; Flynn, 2000; Labrecque & Walsh, 2011; Lem et al., 2013).

Attachment and interdependence creates a difficult dilemma for pet-owning street involved youth; lose their companion animal (which is often their only source of emotional

support) in order to obtain urgently needed services or continue to depend on them and rely on other avenues of support which are usually insufficient. Research has consistently shown that youth with companion animals will chose their pets over the utilization of services, such as health care, housing, or employment services (Lem et al., 2013; Rhoades et al., 2014; Singer et al., 1995) or seek out 'pet-friendly' options, which are extremely limited (Thompson et al, 2005).

In a study by Bukowsli and Buetow (2011) homeless women in New Zealand commonly described their dogs as family and participants stated they would continue to live outdoors if their dogs could not be housed with them. Of the sixty-six homeless pet owners in Sacramento surveyed by Singer et al. (1995), the majority of participants stated a preference for being rehoused; however, 99.3% of males and 96.4% of females reported that they would refuse housing that did not include their animals. And, in the same study, 96.6% of acutely homeless and 93.3% of chronically homeless participants said they would never choose housing without their pets (Singer et al., 1995). In another study by Rhoades et al. (2014), only 36.5% of pet owning homeless youth had utilized housing services in the past month, compared to 52.4% of non-pet owning homeless youth. This trend continued for employment services, as only 37.3% of pet-owning homeless youth had utilized employment services compared to 56.3% of non-pet owning homeless youth (Rhoades et al., 2014). Another result from this study was that pet-owning street involved youth were much less likely to be staying at a shelter or housing program (4%) than those without pets (16.8%) and were more likely to be staying in alternative housing, most often family. Disturbing within these results is that street involved youth who were staying in these situations were nearly twice as likely to report having been hit or having seen someone

being hit, when compared to non-pet owning youth in the same living situation (Rhoades et al., 2014). This suggests that street involved youth with companion animals may be more likely than their non-pet owning counterparts to be staying in violent environments as a way of staying with their companion animals. Current research has indicated that pet-owners in abusive or violent situations will often choose to stay or delay getting help in order to keep their pets with them because they are afraid to leave their pets in the abusive environment for fear of the pet's safety (Ascione, 1998; Flynn, 2000; Labrecque & Walsh, 2011; Rhoades et al., 2014).

These results suggests that companion animals provide youth experiencing homelessness with intense emotional, physical, and social support and yet these youth face specific challenges to accessing helpful services. The results also suggest that considering the pre-existing human-animal bond between street involved youth and their companion animals in treatment planning and service design is an important step in assisting these youth (Labrecque & Walsh, 2011; Rhoades et al., 2014; Singer et al., 1995).

Youth homelessness is a persistent and serious issue in Canadian society with immediate and long-term consequences. Approximately thirty-four percent of those surveyed on the streets in HRM were aged 16-24 years (Background Report: Homeless and street involved youth in HRM, 2005) and according to the most recent statistics available from Employment and Social Development Canada, 29,964 youth used Canadian emergency shelters in 2009. Although reasons for living on the streets are multifaceted and complicated, street involved youth tend to share histories of family conflict, violence, and/or abuse (Busen et al., 2008; Ferguson, 2009; Karabanow, 2006; Roy 2004). In one

Australian study (Mallett et al., 2005), one hundred percent of the participants, 302 young people experiencing homelessness, reported family breakdown or conflict.

Regardless of their reasons for being there, youth street involvement is associated with numerous negative outcomes across multiple domains, including cognitive and academic functioning, mental and physical health, and financial stability (Farah et al., 2006; Rhule-Louie, 2008; Wrate & McLoughlin, 1997). Street involved youth generally have fewer social supports, leaving them at greater risk of making poor choices and operating in high risk situations compared to their housed peers (Rhule-Louie, 2008). Studies have shown impairments in visual-motor and problem solving skills, logical thinking, and processing speed (Parks et al., 2007). Several studies have illustrated the impact of youth homelessness on academic achievement and high school failure (Buckner et al., 2001; Rafferty et al., 2004; Rubin et al., 2001). In a sample of homeless youth, Busen et al. (2008) found as few as 20% had graduated from high school or had completed a General Educational Development test (GED).

Due to histories of abuse, unstable and often unsafe living conditions, limited financial and emotional resources, engagement in substance use, and high risk sexual activity street involved youth are at higher risk for poor physical and mental health than their housed counterparts (Johnson et al., 1996; Wrate et al., 1997). Literature has consistently reported on the high levels of psychiatric disorders among homeless youth, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, psychosis and substance abuse; homeless youth are twice as likely as their housed peers to have a lifetime prevalence of psychotic disorders (Kamieniecki, 2001; Slesnick & Prestopnik, 2005).

Meltzer et al. (2012), interviewed 7461 individuals, aged 16-34 years, and found, consistent with previous studies, that those who ran away from home as a youth were significantly more likely to report a variety of adverse experiences before the age of sixteen, including physical violence from parents or caregivers, parental divorce, sexual abuse, and other forms of family breakdown. Results from this study also offered indication that youth who ran away from home were three times more likely to have a lifetime history of suicide attempts than those young people who were securely housed throughout adolescence (Meltzer et al., 2012). Other research has demonstrated that there are markedly high rates of suicide ideation, attempts, and completed suicides amongst homeless populations (Kamieniecki, 2001). In fact, suicide is the single leading cause of death among those who are currently homeless or living on the streets (Brandon & Hadland, 2012). These results suggest that running away from home is an important factor in mental health and suicide that persists into adulthood.

There are many consequences of youth homelessness and numerous studies have suggested that the longer people are homeless the more difficult it becomes to get off the streets (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2002; Wolch et al., 1998). In a study by Johnson and Chamberlain (2008) of 1677 individuals who first became homeless when they were eighteen years or younger, three-quarters had progressed to adult homelessness. The theoretic argument underpinning the effect of prolonged exposure to homelessness is the social adaption account, which suggests that the longer an individual is homeless the more they adapt to homelessness as a 'way of life' (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2002; May 2000; Snow & Anderson, 1993). Research such as this provides a strong argument for early intervention with street involved youth and recent research indicates that the 'Housing

First' model, a recovery-oriented approach which secures housing first and then provides treatment and services, is an excellent means to do so. This model contradicts the traditional treatment first model where those experiencing homelessness enter emergency shelters until they can overcome personal issues, such as addiction or employment. Complicating matters is the fact that many of these youth share their lives with a companion animal. For example, in a Toronto study, eight percent of homeless youth and eleven percent of vulnerably housed individuals had pets (Lem et al., 2013). So the question remains, how do service providers use interventions such as 'Housing First' with youth experiencing homelessness when so many of the services they need do not allow their companion and often emotional support animals?

Youth homelessness is a pervasive issue that may come with negative emotional, social, physical, and financial consequences both long and short term; however, one positive coping mechanism that youth experiencing homelessness regularly use is bonding with and sharing their lives with companion animals. Research indicates that as many as twenty-five percent of Canadian homeless youth report currently owning a pet (Lem et al, 2013). Although the human-animal bond has been shown to provide benefits for all people, this bond has been revealed to be particularly strong for youth experiencing homelessness, which may be due to the physical, emotional, and social benefits companion animals provide for those without permanent housing. This attachment is illustrated in the study by Labrecque and Walsh (2011) where 86% of homeless participants responded that shelters should designate space for companion animals.

Unfortunately there are few Canadian services designed for street involved youth that permit pets. Lem et al (2013) conducted an Internet search using the key words: homeless, shelter, pet-friendly, pets, welcome, Canada which resulted in only 6 hits. I repeated this internet search exactly (Google; September 4, 2016) and found 5 shelters or services designed to assist homeless pet-owners. These were the Fred Victor Bethlehem United Shelter, Toronto, ON; RainCity Housing – Triage Shelter, Vancouver, BC; The Salvation Army Centre of Hope, Abbotsford, BC; the New Fountain Shelter, Vancouver, BC; and Barry House, Halifax, NS. Further research found that Barry House and the other facilities operated by Shelter Nova Scotia recently revoked their pet policy and no longer allow companion animals. The executive director of Shelter Nova Scotia commented that, although she was not with the organization in 2015 when they made the decision to no longer take animals, it was not taken lightly and in fact took two years to make (L., Wilson, personal communication, March 11, 2016). In the end issues with animal abandonment, aggressive animals, clients improper care and/or supervision of animals, and the extra burden this put on the employees coupled with the opening of Out of the Cold emergency shelter caused them to implement the changes (L, Wilson, personal communication, March 11, 2016). Out of the Cold, an emergency all-ages homeless shelter which operates out of Saint Matthew's United Church in downtown Halifax does allow companion animals but, according to Jeff Karabanow (J. Karabanow, personal communication, February 25, 2016), the organizations co-director and professor at Dalhousie University, the animals need to be kennelled in a separate adjacent room. Although it is common practice for shelters that allow companion animals to require them to stay in a separate kennelled room, this may cause youth experiencing homelessness enough anxiety that they would not use the

shelter. As well, changes in policy at Out of the Cold have made it so that now clients require a referral which can only be granted after all other avenues for seeking shelter have been exhausted. These avenues of research, including Internet searches, interviews with local shelter workers, and a review of the current literature illustrates the critical lack of Canadian 'pet-friendly' services for youth experiencing homelessness which needs to be addressed.

The powerful human-animal bond between street involved youth and companion animals, combined with the severe consequences suffered by those required to relinquish their companion animals in exchange for help, reveals the need for service providers to seek understanding of this relationship and to incorporate 'pet-friendly' services into their work with street involved youth. In 2012, Allie Phillips founded and developed the Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T™) program that provides a start-up guide for organizations wanting to help people and their pets stay together during difficult times (retrieved from www.alliephillips.com, June 24, 2015). Although this program was originally designed for use in women's shelters, it is being utilized in an increasing array of domestic shelters in North America and could be used across a broad range of other services. Through recent research it is becoming increasingly evident that, in order to assist youth with pets who are experiencing homelessness, services and programs will need to strive to understand the strength of these human-animal relationships and the benefits companion animal ownership offers street involved youth. It also may be valuable to consider accepting pets into facilities in order to allow the youth to utilize, often their best and only, source of family.

Through direct interviews and rigorous data analysis, this study focused on gaining insight into the personal experiences of street involved youth with companion animals from the youth's own perspective. Areas explored with the youth included their relationships with companion animals, daily experiences, benefits and/or challenges that being homeless and a pet owner provide, and suggestions youth have to improve their situation. This evidence will contribute to the body of knowledge that will help to deliver an in-depth understanding of street involved youth and their companion animals and assist in improving services designed for this population.

CHAPTER 2: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Methodology and Methods

In order to gain a detailed understanding of the relationship between youth experiencing homelessness and the companion animals with whom they share their lives, I engaged six youth, who regularly spend time at ARK Outreach, a pet-friendly drop-in centre for homeless youth, in discussions regarding the connection they felt with their pets. There are several terms used to indicate youth experiencing homelessness including street involved youth and homeless youth, and all of these terms will be used interchangeably within this report. The conversations with these youth followed an informal interview guide designed for this project that covered topics such as relationship with companion animals, daily life experiences together, and benefits and challenges of sharing life with a companion animal while homeless and/or traveling. From a qualitative perspective, I took a phenomenological approach to explore the combined experiences of street involved youth and companion animals in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The function of a phenomenological approach is to identify phenomena as they are perceived by the participants in a particular situation; in this case the phenomenon is the relationship between street youth and their companion animals and the situation is youth currently living in Halifax and utilizing the services of ARK Outreach during the time period of spring 2016. In human research this usually translates into gathering deep information and insights through inductive, qualitative methods, such as interviews, and presenting insights from the participants' point of view. As one of my goals was to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between youth experiencing homelessness and their

companion animals and I wanted to interview youth to gain their insights, the phenomenological approach was a good fit.

Phenomenology, in general is concerned with the question of how individuals experience the world around them (Moustakas, 1994); because I was searching for a deeper understanding of the common experiences of street involved youth with companion animals I chose this approach. I chose Moustakas (1994) transcendental phenomenology specifically as a framework for this project because it focuses more on a description of the experiences of the participants and less on providing an interpretation of the data by the researcher. In this research approach Moustakas recommends that exploration concentrate on the wholeness of experience and a search for essences of experience (Moustakas, 1994). Using transcendental phenomenology to better understand the relationship between street involved youth and their companion animals provides a depiction of their lived experiences, which can be used by service providers to better assist young people.

Michelle Lem and her colleagues (2013, 2016) have conducted several studies in Ontario, Canada exploring the effects of pet-ownership on street youth and provided the inspiration for this phenomenological inquiry. I continued this investigation in the same vein of inquiry, but differed by delving more deeply into the experiences of street involved youth with companion animals and by examining the specific experiences of those living in smaller Canadian cities, such as Halifax.

My intentions were to interview 5-10 street involved youth about their relationship with their companion animals. In order to reach potential participants I conducted an

initial Internet search for all organizations serving street involved youth within the Halifax area and those organizations that met the criteria were contacted via email in which I introduced myself and the project. I then arranged for a time to call and speak directly with someone at each organization and made follow up calls a few days later. Subsequent calls were made over the next several weeks to arrange for these youth serving organizations to meet with me and discuss my research. Representatives from several organizations, including *Phoenix Youth Shelter*, *Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre (PLEC)*, *Phoenix Centre for Youth*, *ARK Outreach*, *Shelter Nova Scotia*, and *Out of the Cold* met with me and all of them agreed to distribute recruitment materials. These materials comprised of a recruitment brochure and poster, which included my photograph and contact information, purpose of the study, benefits and risks of participation in the study, assurance of right to terminate participation at any time, and incentives offered (\$25 Visa/MasterCard gift card) to the youth utilizing their services (Appendix I).

Despite my best efforts to recruit youth experiencing homelessness from a variety of sources within Halifax, only youth involved with ARK were interviewed. ARK is a drop-in centre for homeless and street involved youth between the ages of 16-24 operating on Gottingen Street, in downtown Halifax. Of all the organizations assisting youth and homeless people in Halifax, only ARK and Out of the Cold allow companion animals, and of those two only ARK caters exclusively to youth. Therefore, youth from ARK were both most likely to fit the parameters of the current study and to have an interest in the subject matter, making them more likely to volunteer to participate. One male youth involved with Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre contacted me via telephone and arranged to

meet at Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre (PLEC) for an interview time. Unfortunately this youth did not make it and I was unable to contact him again.

I conducted semi-structured individual interviews using an informal interview guide that I developed and informed by the research by Lem et al (2013, 2016) (Appendix III). All interviews took place at the convenience of the youth and at the youth's request, in a private room at ARK. Youth were informed by ARK youth workers that they could choose any public meeting place where they would be comfortable being interviewed (e.g. Public library, coffee shop, drop- in centre). All of the youth chose to be interviewed in the private space provided by ARK.

I first asked participants to identify themselves and their companion animals with any pseudonym of their choice. I then explained that this would ensure confidentiality, as real identities would never be known. I obtained verbal informed consent, using a form letter (Appendix II), which included explaining the purpose of the study, the risks and benefits associated with participation, withdrawal procedures, and incentives offered (\$25 Visa/MasterCard gift card). I read the letter to each youth and they were then given an opportunity to ask questions before I requested consent. I recorded the date and time of verbal consent on a separate sheet which was securely stored with the research data.

Although street involved youth are considered a vulnerable population, they would also be considered emancipated minors, and are, therefore, legally independent and able to consent for themselves. Under common law in Nova Scotia, an emancipated minor is a youth under the age of majority, who lives apart from his/her parent or guardian, is not financially dependent on a parent or guardian, and/or is married. (Guidelines for Youth

Health Centers in Nova Scotia, 2009) Yet these requirements are not considered sufficient on their own, service providers must still determine if the youth has the capacity to consent to treatment. As we discussed the informed consent form and procedure I therefore assessed each youth, as best I could, for signs of capacity to consent, such as ability to understand the information needed to make decisions and to consider the consequences and risks of that decision (Health Care Consent Act, 1992). All of the youth I interviewed were able to ask specific questions regarding the verbal consent form, for example what would the research be used for and who would get the information. The youth were also able to discuss aspects of the consent process, such as the universities complaint process if they had concerns or questions about how I was conducting my research. After a careful verbal consent process and based on the youth's own responses, I found that they had the capacity to consent to participate in this study.

The inclusion parameter for this study included youth, of any gender, between the ages of 16 and 24 years, who use services intended for street involved youth, and who self-identified as now or previously having a strong relationship with a companion animal (pet). The participants were asked exploratory questions throughout the interview about their close relationships with their companion animals and all of them were currently using services intended for youth aged 16-24 years, which established them as fitting within the parameters of the study.

All interviews were audio-taped using two recording devices, a mobile phone and hand-held tape recorder, in case of difficulties, with the participants' knowledge and consent. Following their completion, I transcribed each interview verbatim.

I analysed the interviews according to Moustakas (1994) approach of transcendental phenomenology. I chose this approach because the aim of phenomenology is the rigorous and impartial study of things as they appear in order to gain an understanding of the human consciousness and experience (Valle et al., 1989). Furthermore, the detailed, comprehensive steps for data analysis set out by Moustakas (1994) are useful to researchers' because they provide a set of comprehensive instructions to follow. These instructions include the first step a researcher must engage in, the **Epoché** process. This involves bracketing out any biases that might influence the research, being honest and open about them, and then reflecting upon them until they no longer have an effect. The next step is **Reduction**, where the interviews are carefully examined and any significant statements are highlighted and put into a list unmodified. For the current study there were nine and a half pages of significant statements which was too cumbersome to include in the body of the paper, but the unabridged version can be found in Appendix V – Significant Statements. All of these statements were thoroughly reviewed multiple times and then any statements that were repetitive were removed from the list to create Table 1: Selected Significant Statement. The contents from Table 1 were then systematically examined and then grouped into themes.

Data Analysis

The first step in any transcendental phenomenological research is to attempt to set aside, personal experiences, as best as possible, in order to have a fresh perspective. This process is known as Epoché, a Greek work meaning to refrain from judgement (Moustakas, 1994). In order to begin this process researchers are required to make their

preconceptions and presuppositions overt and render them as clear as possible (Valle et al., 1989).

In response, I reflected upon my own preconceptions and biases related to youth experiencing homelessness and their companion animals. I was able to identify the following assumptions of mine that might have influence my understanding and interpretation of the interviews in this study. The first, is the assumption that being a homeless youth is not a choice and a belief that youth, on some level, would prefer a more stable living environment. This assumption came from my own experiences of the concept “home” and from personal fears that stem from an insecure lifestyle. Although homelessness may not be a choice for some, it may also be a conscious choice for other youth, opting for a more non-traditional, transient lifestyle or to travel for extended periods of time as part of their lifestyle.

The second assumption I held was that, like anything, the relationship between homeless youth and their companion animals would have both negative and positive impacts, but that for those youth bonded with their pet the benefits would far outweigh the challenges. This belief stems from my own relationships with companion animals, which have been extremely positive. Related to this, I believed that these youth experiencing homelessness and bonded with their pets would suffer significantly if they were forced to relinquish their companion animals. Again, this comes from my own experiences with companion animals. After much pleading, I was given a Sheltie, Sally Brown, for my eighth birthday and she quickly became my best friend. We were extremely close for sixteen years and her death impacted me greatly. It may be that youth experiencing homelessness

share similar feelings when an animal friend is taken from them, but it is also possible that youth would have different feelings, including relief from the responsibility of companion animal ownership.

The final assumption I was able to identify was that street involved youth would want, approve of, and use pet-friendly service options if they were available to them. This may be accurate; however, there are many aspects that influence the use of services by street involved youth, so even if there were pet-friendly options, youth may still not use the services because of other reasons, including their companion animals' safety or distrust of youth serving professionals.

During the epoché process and before beginning to analyze the interviews I repeatedly disconnected myself from these memories until I felt a sense of closure and felt receptive to listening and hearing the participants' stories without colouring it with my own preconceived notions. This was an essential phase that allowed me to nurture my curiosity and, to the best of my ability, set aside any assumptions in order to comprehend the experiences of these youth from their viewpoint. By engaging in the epoché process I was able to focus on the two central questions consistent with Moustakas (1994) approach; what are the experiences of street involved youth with companion animals? And in what situations or contexts did these youth experiencing homelessness understand sharing their lives with companion animal?

With these questions in mind I reviewed the interviews multiple times and completed the first step in data analysis, transcendental phenomenological reduction. The initial phase of this process is horizontalization. Through extensive review of the interviews

I identified 124 statements from the transcripts that provide information about the relationship between the participants and their companion animals and the experiences they shared. The ten pages of statements were taken unmodified from the transcript and put into Table 1: Significant Statements (See Appendix IV). In this process, which literally means reducing the world as it is naturally considered, to a world of pure phenomena, or experience, each and every statement was considered in and of itself, highlighting the textural qualities (Dowling, 2007).

CHAPTER 3: THE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR EXPERIENCE

The following is a short description of each participant and the significant companion animal(s) who affected each life. All of the female participants brought their dogs with them for the interviews, however; neither of the male participants brought a companion animal. All names used in this report are pseudonyms given by the youth to protect their identity.

Presentation of the Participants

KELSEY AND DRAKE:

Kelsey, a young street involved woman in her twenties, sits close with her approximately one hundred pound dog, Drake, a Black Lab, Rottweiler, and Pitbull cross. The two friends have been inseparable for five years, ever since Drake was a puppy and have kept each other company as they travelled across Canada together. Kelsey describes Drake as her “anchor” who keeps her grounded and safe.

RACHEL, HADES, AND STIX:

Rachel, a young woman who had been transient for several years, adopted her first dog Hades, a cross of unknown origin, from a family in Sackville when he was just a puppy five years ago. Two years ago she adopted her second dog Stix, a Pitbull mix, on the day he was born from a friend whose dog gave birth to puppies. Rachel talks about being deeply dependent on her dogs for emotional support. Stix sleeps between her legs under the covers every night, which she doesn’t seem to mind, but her boyfriend (Max) has a few complaints about sharing the bed with two huge dogs!

COCO AND BUDDY:

Coco, a young man in his mid-twenties who likes to travel, shares his dog, Buddy, a Border Collie Mix, with his partner. The pair have been with Buddy since he was a puppy and they enjoy travelling with him and say he helps them appreciate the outdoors. Cocoa describes Buddy as his friend and guardian.

ALEXIS AND FRAGGLE:

Alexis, a young street involved woman, sits and strokes the fur of her dog, Fraggie, a Shephard, Husky, and Collie Mix. About a year and a half ago Fraggie was being passed around from youth to youth at parks and was on her fifth owner in as many months. Alexis rescued her and the pair have been inseparable even since. Alexis describes Fraggie as her “fur baby” who has helped her get through some pretty tough times.

GWEN AND LILY:

Gwen, a street involved woman in her mid-twenties, adopted her dog from another participant; Rachel’s dog, Hades, had puppies and even though Gwen was reluctant at first, one of those puppies, Lilly, came to live with her. Gwen and Lilly have been together for four years now and have become emotionally dependent on each other over that time. In fact Gwen explains that Lilly always knows when she is feeling down or scared and makes her feel safer.

MAX AND MR. SCIENTIST AND DAHLIA:

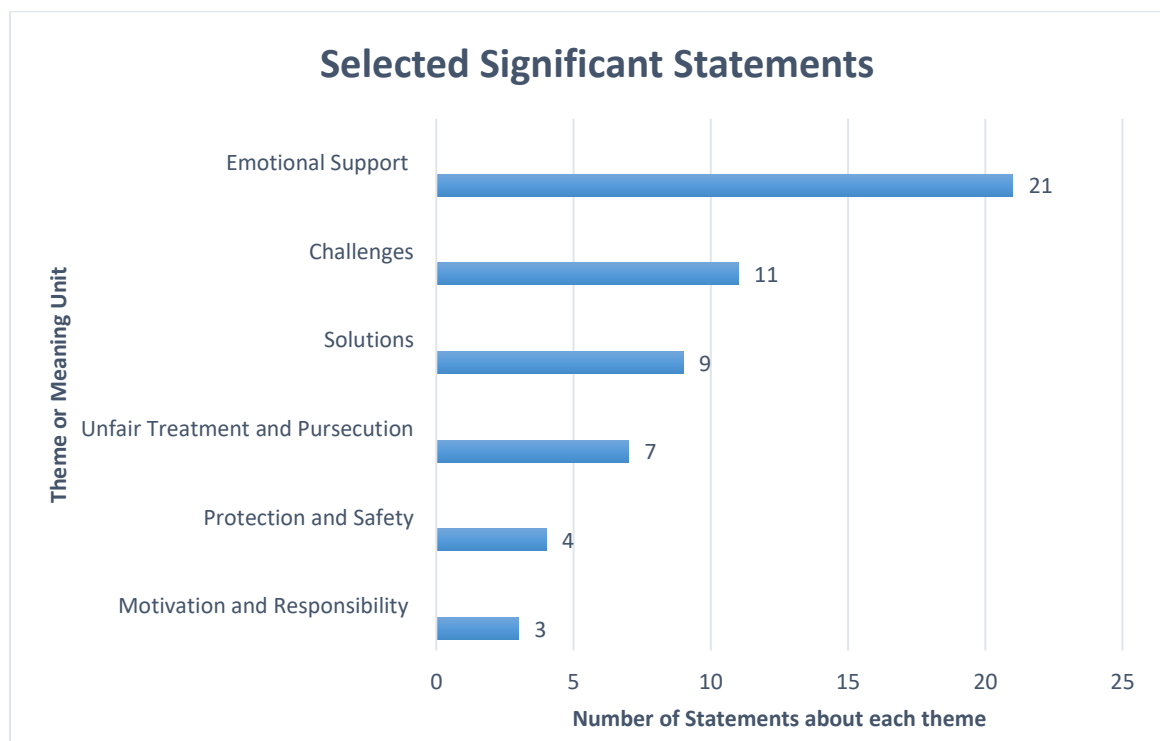
Max, a young man who has travelled extensively, had many relationships with animals during the years he was experiencing homelessness. When he began travelling at age sixteen, he explains that he was adopted by older travelling kids who had dogs; at that point he viewed companion animals as an annoyance and nuisance. Later he adopted a pet rat, named Mr. Scientist, who became his constant companion while on the road and helped him to appreciate the value of companion animals. Later still Max travelled with a dog, Dahlia, which he shared with his then partner. Max then traveled without companion animals, but stated he was really lonely. After some time without companion animals, Max now shares his life with another participant from the study, Rachel and her two dogs, Hades and Stix. Although Max discusses the negative impact companion animals have had on his life, he also asserts the more powerful beneficial impact that they have had and continue to have.

Youth Statements

In the beginning of transcendental phenomenological inquiry each statement is considered as possessing equal value, but, consistent with the second step of horizontalization, I reviewed Table 1: Significant Statements (Appendix V) and deleted any accounts that were repetitive or overlapping. The remaining statements which are shown in Table 2: Selected Significant Statements (Appendix VI), are considered the horizons or textual meaning. Table 2: Selected Significant Statements lists the fifty-seven verbatim significant statements identified from the transcripts as reported by the street involved youth interviewed for this study. These statements were subjectively extrapolated and

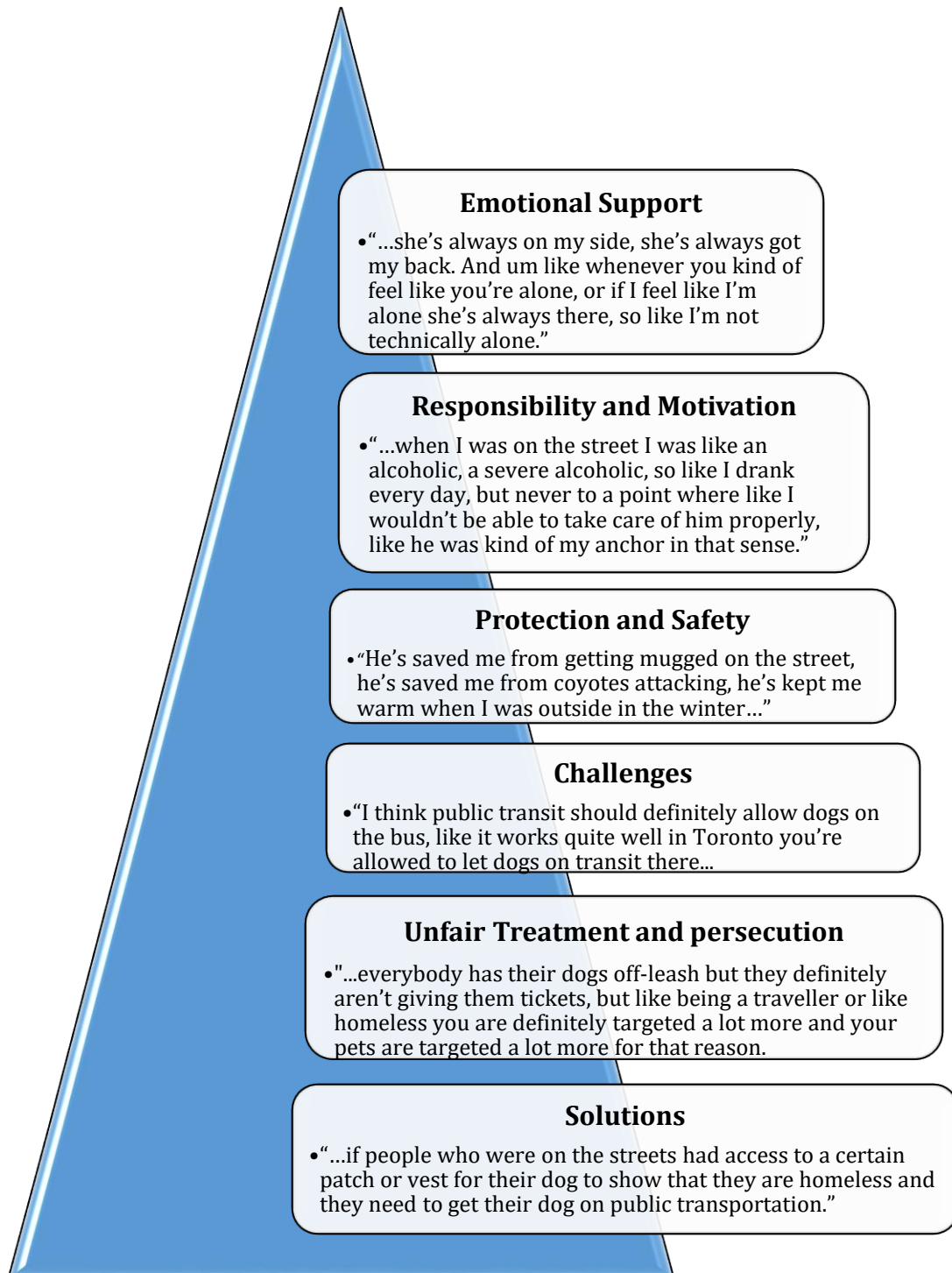
reflect non-repetitive, non-overlapping accounts that in aggregate provide a synopsis of the range of perspectives of street involved youth with companion animals. At this stage these statements are represented in no particular order as I reflected upon the way in which the youth experience sharing their lives with companion animals without the stability of a permanent home. Next I carefully examined the significant statements and grouped them into themes or meaning units (Moustakas, 1994). The summary Table below illustrates the number of times youth made a significant statement about one of the themes to provide a sense of the participant's experience and voice.

TABLE 3: *Comparison of number of statements made by youth regarding each theme*



Six themes emerged from this research on street involved youth and their companion animals: Emotional Support, Protection and Safety, Responsibility and Motivation, Challenges, Unfair Treatment and Persecution, and Solutions.

TABLE 4: Themes and Evidence below outlines the six meaning units and provides evidence from the youth statements.



CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THEMES

Themes

After careful scrutiny of Table 2: Selected Significant Statements taken from the participant interviews six themes were identified from the data. The table above outlines each theme and provides evidence in the form of statements directly from the youth. Some of these themes, such as companion animals provide *emotional support* are well documented, but the detailed information from this study will provide a deeper understanding of these concepts. Other themes, such as the *unfair treatment* of homeless youth by law enforcement have been less studied, but do have a few articles to support them (Gaetz & O'Grady, 2011). Still other themes, such as a *solutions* seem to be novel, without any support in the current research literature.

Emotional Support

Companion animals provide street involved youth with emotional support. Consistent with findings from current literature (Lem et al., 2013; Rew et al., 2000; Thompson et al., 2006) , street involved youth interviewed for this study reported that companion animals provide them with essential and beneficial emotional support. All participant described their companion animal as familial and the emotional support they provided as similar to that of family. All of the participants compared the relationship they have with their companion animals to a parent-child relationship. This can be seen in the statements made by Rachel, who describes her relationship with her dogs by saying, “...like people have kids, I love them just as much as somebody would love their children” and Kelsey, who states “..., it's

like having a kid, so he has taught me responsibility and discipline that I never would have learned before...".

Some of the youth from this study also compared their relationship with their companion animal with other family members, for example Gwen stated, *"I view us as sisters in a way, you know like I'll take care of you, you take care of me, you know like we've got each other's back."* As well, almost all of the participants compared their relationship with their companion animal to a best friend and constant companion. In fact, most of the youth were always with their companion animals except on rare occasions. Alexis explains *"...we spend twenty-four-seven with each other pretty much, ah, she goes everywhere with me..."* These results mirror previous research (Ascione, 1998; Labrecque & Walsh, 2011), particularly a study done by Bukowsli and Buetow (2011) where participants from the study, homeless women, regularly described their companion animals as family. Many street involved youth are transient and/or lack reliable social supports, but they are almost constantly accompanied by their faithful pets and the youth rely upon them as one would a family member.

The statement made by Gwen regarding "having each other's back" and the concept of trust were repeatedly discussed and emphasized by most of the participants from this study. Cocoa echoed her thoughts by stating, *"...he's my friend, he's my partner, he's the champion of my partner, my lover, yeah, so he's also protector, guardian, so yeah, a friend to watch each other's back."* For these young people, who often have histories of family breakdown and conflict and have often been victims of crimes and other forms of maltreatment (Busen et al., 2008; Ferguson, 2009; Karabanow, 2006; Roy 2004),

companion animals may be the only positive relationship in their lives. Youth certainly report feelings of loyalty and devotion toward their companion animals which appear to be based on their time together. This is illustrated by the comment made by Kelsey, *"I trust him (dog) before I trust any human, for sure"*.

Beyond ongoing emotional support, the street involved young people from this study reported that their companion animals assisted them with mental health issues, including loneliness and depression. One of the more difficult aspects of being a youth experiencing homelessness is often a lack of social supports. In his interview, Max described the loneliness of travelling and how he relied upon companion animals to combat that loneliness, saying, *"...they like gave me someone to talk to a lot..."* This concept has been well established within contemporary research (Rew et al., 2000; Karabanow, 2004) and was recently further developed in a study performed in four cities in Ontario Canada (Lem et al., 2016). One hundred eighty-nine street involved youth were surveyed in order to investigate the association between depression and pet-ownership among street-involved youth. Logistic regression modelling found that pet ownership was negatively associated with depression even after controlling for gender, drug use, and time since youth left home. In fact, the odds of being depressed were three times greater for youth without pets than for those with pets (Lem et al., 2016). This statistical evidence reflects Max's sentiments about being without a companion animal, *"I'm making all this money, and it was cool, but I was just like drinking a lot, but I was lonely as f**k and like I was not happy. There were parts of my life that were easier, but it was not worth it...Now I have dogs in my life again... and now I'm much, much happier"*.

Particularly interesting within these results was that three out of the six participants from the current study revealed that they suffered from what they termed as severe social anxiety and that they relied upon their companion animals as a method of managing it. This can be seen in this statement by Rachel, *"People like rely on (their animals) like, even if like their animals aren't service animals; There are some people like me that have very bad anxiety, or other issues that like can't get a service card for them, but like we need the comfort of having them..."* It is also apparent in Alexis' account, *"...instead of being sad in my bed, she gets me out of the house and she puts a smile on my face and yup, she's definitely helped a lot with my depression and like my social anxiety like that I have outside. I feel a lot calmer when she's with me."* Today emotional-support animals are being used to reduce stress with various populations including hospitalized children (Tsai, Friedman, & Thomas, 2010), veterans (Parish-Plass, 2008), and children in educational settings (Jalongo, 2005). Youth experiencing homelessness are yet another vulnerable population that would benefit from the use of emotional-support animals as a method of managing mental health issues, including anxiety.

Overall, youth from this study viewed their companion animals as family and felt that the emotional support they provided them is invaluable. Their animals offer them the companionship, loyalty, comfort, joy, and non-judgemental support associated with family that is so often lacking in the lives of youth experiencing homelessness. The value of the human animal relationship to the youth from this study can be summed up with the remark by Rachel, *"...it's hard to explain how much you love them."*

Responsibility and Motivation

Companion animals help to develop a sense of responsibility and provide

motivation. Research results indicate that companion animals provide street involved youth with a sense of personal responsibility and help motivate them to make better life choices (Bender et al, 2007; Labrecque & Walsh, 2011; Rew, 2000). This is borne out in the comments by some of the participants from the current study such as Coco, who says that, *"...it (having a companion animal) did make a dramatic impact, because you really have to start caring about someone else's life..."* and Gwen, *"I feel like she's helped me like develop into the person I am, or I am growing into a lot just by giving me responsibility, and just support right?"*

Training their companion animal in particular was an aspect of the human animal bond that the youth reported had taught them responsibility by teaching them patience, empathy, and compassion, as well as training instructional techniques. As Kelsey plainly stated in reference to training her dog, *"Yeah, also training him has definitely helped"*. Rachel expands further on this idea by explaining, *"...I had like really bad anger problems just over like getting frustrated very easily with like, during training and stuff for her at first because I'd be like why don't you just know this and stuff ...Like having them taught me like patience..."*. This concept can be understood through the research by Melson (1990) and Mallon (1993) who explained that while children are conventionally considered recipients of nurturance from parents and other caregivers, and not as nurturers themselves, animals can assist in developing appropriate nurturing behaviors. Mallon (1994) also explain that

young people are afforded few opportunities to be the person in charge, and animals provide one of the few chances for them to practice their mastery over another being.

Congruent with the 'pet before self' outlook adopted by many street involved youth, participants' in this study discussed avoiding certain risky behaviours and engaging in other protective behaviours in order to keep their pets with them, safe and happy. For example some participants discussed their companion animals motivating role in modifying or ending their drug use, such as Kelsey who notes, *"...Before I got him I was into a lot of other drugs and stuff like that, and when I first got him I quit all drugs cold turkey..."*. Others discussed how their companion animal motivated them in regard to legal issues, for example Gwen stated, *"...I got into a little bit of troubles last year, with just like legal stuff and um it wasn't really looking that good ... and um I think like the biggest reason why I wanted to like fight it and to like just get through it was just because of my dog. You know, I don't want to lose my dog and I told that to everyone. It was extremely important to me."* Max also commented on the powerful motivation provided by the threat of losing a cherished companion animal, saying, *"...if you get ticketed or go to jail, depends what province or area it is, they might put your dog in the pound, and if you can't get out in time..."* Participants in this study clearly had the impression that if they were not able to care for their companion animal for any reason, including incarceration, health issues, or drug abuse, the animals would likely be rehomed or euthanized. The fear of losing their precious companion animal provided them with enough motivation to make prosocial choices in order to be able to stay with them. This is apparent in Kelsey's comment, *"...he (her dog) is too precious for me to have him taken away from me."*

Protection and Safety

Companion animals provide protection and help ensure safety for street involved youth. The majority of contemporary literature in the field concurs that youth experiencing homelessness are at a higher risk of being victims of crime than youth in stable homes (Gaetz, 2004; Karabanow, 2004). In a recent study of 240 Toronto street-involved youth, over 76 per cent responded that they had been a victim of a crime within the past twelve months and 72 per cent reported that they had been victimized more than once during that same time period (Gaetz, O'Grady, & Buccieri, 2010). One of the key reasons street involved youth often acquire a companion animal, usually dogs, is to protect themselves from such maltreatment (Kidd & Kidd, 1994; Rew, 2000; Taylor, Williams, & Gray, 2004).

Perhaps one of the most elementary and essential forms of protection a companion animal can provide in a climate such as Canada's is body heat, as Kelsey notes in speaking of how her pet has aided her: *"He's kept me warm when I was outside in the winter."* The fact that animals provide those experiencing homelessness with much-needed warmth during the winter or on cold nights year-round has also been supported in recent literature (Lem et al., 2013).

More importantly the youth from the current study consistently reported that their companion animals, again usually dogs, helped protect them against several forms of criminal victimization. Several direct statements regarding this theme were made during the interviews. It could be said that at no time are street-involved youth more potentially defenceless than when they are alone at night, especially when sleeping outdoors. As

Kelsey testifies “...people have tried to mug me a couple of time and because my dog jumped out of my sleeping bag growling at them they backed off and left”. Rachel discusses the protection a dog may offer against one of the gravest and most frightening dangers that travelling youth face, that of unwanted sexual advances or even the threat of sexual assault while hitching rides on lonely highways, a situation of extreme vulnerability; “...like I had a few issues, like hitchhiking and being hit on and stuff, and like that’s probably one thing that really pushed me to get a dog...”. Max makes two statements that help describe the protective function companion animals serve in his life, noting that thieves are “...much less likely to rob a sleeping person if that person has a dog chained to them that’s barking at them” and “...sometimes at night when you have to go on foot everywhere, like some neighborhoods aren’t very good to walk through without a dog walking with you”.

One aspect of this issue of safety and protection that I did not foresee was the protective role companion animals played in assisting youth with being prepared for life on the road. As Kelsey explains, without her dog to care for, “I definitely wouldn’t have taken care of myself or taken the proper gear on the road...” She goes on to say, “...there were times when I had nothing but dog food to eat when I was stranded in the middle of nowhere”. It seems that young people may be more likely to take along necessities, such as sleeping bags, tarps, food, and water when traveling or sleeping on the streets when accompanied by a companion animal. This ‘pet before self’ viewpoint of street involved youth with companion animals is well documented in the literature (Lem et al., 2013; Rhodes et al., 2015). The current study provides strong evidence that this stance of ensuring a companion animal’s safety also frequently preserves a person’s own safety.

Challenges

Sharing life with a companion animal and experiencing homelessness presents specific challenges. One of the most readily apparent and well documented challenges for any homeless person with a companion animal is the lack of pet-friendly services. Research has convincingly shown that in the absence of services that allow their companion animal young people experiencing homelessness have greater difficulty accessing emergency shelter and pursuing stable housing or employment and education opportunities (Bender et al., 2007; Lem et al., 2013; Singer et al., 1995). The young people interviewed for the current study commented on this issue many times. Kelsey remarks on the subject of shelters permitting companion animals, *"I think that all of them absolutely should. It would help a lot of people. Um a lot of people sleep outside in the wintertime because they have their dog and they can't take it into the shelter; I have before."* And Rachel comments, *"Shelters absolutely don't allow pets...which is, pretty much like just cuts off any of that kind of help when you are travelling."* If it is difficult to find shelter with a companion animal if you have no home, it may be even harder to hold down a job. Max describes in his interview lending his dog out while he went to work and the impact this had, *"...I'd do everything with her, except if I had to work or whatever..."* Coco succinctly explains the impact of not being allowed to take his companion animal into the facility run by an organization designed to assist people in his situation by saying, *"...yeah, so like it sort of stops me from going, actually seeking aid..."*

Connected to the issues of housing and employment and educational opportunities, and most commonly noted amongst the youth in this study, was the issue of transportation.

The youth described the many difficulties they encountered when their companion animals were not permitted on public transportation, such as buses and ferries. All of the youth commented on the challenges they have encountered because their companion animals are not allowed on Metro Transit Buses. Most of the youth also discussed the more accepting policies adopted by the public transit system in Toronto, including Alexis who stated, *"I think public transit should definitely allow dogs on the bus, like it works quite well in Toronto. You're allowed to let dogs on transit there, just not during rush hour, and they never have problems. I don't see why other cities have a problem with accepting dogs on the bus."* In particular one youth, Rachel, relates the story of when she was returning home to Halifax from Newfoundland on the ferry with her two dogs. Both of the dogs wore illegitimate service dog vests, but when Rachel didn't have official documentation they were rejected. Rachel recalls the impact this experience had on her, *"...like I had a very bad anxiety attack, and they weren't going to let me on the boat and I said 'this all the money I have like I'm just trying to get back home', and it was so ridiculous and so stressful..."*. Thankfully staff from Northumberland Ferries were able to locate kennels for Rachel's dogs and she was able to board the next ferry home. Although problems with companion animals and public transportation are a common and significant concern for all of the participants in this study, it does not appear as an area of exploration within current literature, suggesting an important avenue for both future study and a crucial issue for intervention by advocates for homeless youth.

Unfair Treatment and Persecution

Youth experiencing homelessness face unfair treatment and even persecution.

One of the specific challenges the street involved young people of this study reported was unfair treatment that they perceived as sometimes amounting to persecution from both law enforcement and the general public. There were two common objections. The first that police unfairly targeted street involved youth and their companion animals, which resulted in negative consequences for both youth and animal, including expensive tickets they had little ability to pay, incarceration, and/or relinquishment of the companion animal. The youth spoke of law enforcement officers ticketing them for infractions when others, who were not homeless, would not be ticketed for the same behaviour. One of the youth from this study gave the example of tickets for off-leash infractions that were given to street involved youth but not members of the general public who also had their dogs off-leash. Alexis explained one of the dilemma's she has faced while traveling with her dog, *"...fines for not having your dog licensed, I've had that even though I'm just passing through town so there's no reason why I would have licensing for my dog for that town since I'm just travelling through."* Kelsey explains a frequent predicament street involved youth and their companion animals encounter, *"...a lot of people on the street will be put in jail over tickets they can't pay, just because they can't get places with their animal."* This account is in agreement with a study co-authored by Gaetz and O'Grady in 2011 in which they reviewed all the tickets given out under the Safe Streets Act in Toronto, Ontario. In 2010 15,224 tickets were given out to people experiencing homelessness, which added up to \$189,936 and 16,847 hours of police time. As confirmed by the participants in the current study, few of those tickets would be paid as youth experiencing homelessness would not usually have

the up to \$500 to pay a ticket for a first offense. As stated earlier, Max explains the consequences many of these youth face, *“...if you get ticketed or go to jail, depends what province or area it is, they might put your dog in the pound, and if you can’t get out in time...”* Youth in this study, clearly felt as if they were being unfairly targeted by law enforcement and other research also indicates that this is occurring.

The second issue the youth had to deal with was judgement from the general public *“...regular people will look at that and they will say, “oh these people can’t take care of a dog, like they’re on the street they shouldn’t even have an animal”, things like that...”* *“I think there is probably a lot of biased opinions like that.”* The youth from this study reported feeling judged by the general public which further isolated them.

Further complicating the issue is the fact that the street involved youth from this study reported that their companion animals are at risk from the general public when left unattended, tied up outside. Companion animals have been fed dangerous foods, such as chicken wings, set loose (leash cutting), and stolen. While these issues may exist for anyone who leaves a dog unattended outside, participants believe they are being specifically targeted. This can be seen in this quote from Kelsey, *“...people steal dogs, people steal dogs specifically outside of drop-in centres.”* Alexis discussed this issue too, stating, *“...that’s definitely happened to a few people’s dogs, ah, being taken away from them just because they are homeless, which is terrible.”* This situation leaves youth experiencing homelessness in a terrible predicament; companion animals are generally not allowed in public buildings or on public transportation, nor can they leave them tied up outside for fear of their animals health and safety.

Solutions

Street-involved youth with companion animals propose viable solutions to the problems they face. The street involved youth with companion animals interviewed for this study were extremely resourceful and reflective, and were eager to make suggestions on methods to improve both relations with and services to them. Most of the suggestions the youth from this study made fell under one of two categories: strategies to improve services aimed at assisting youth experiencing homelessness and their companion animals and ideas about raising awareness in order to improve relations and decrease bias and judgement.

Some of the suggestions the youth made to improve shelters included creating separate space for those youth with and those without companion animals within public buildings, such as shelters and drop-in centres. According to the youth this strategy would allow those with fear, dislike, or allergies to stay away from the animals while pet-owners could remain with their companion animals. Kelsey suggests, *“...make a separate room for dog owners that they could sleep with them and stuff...”* While Alexis feels, *“...just letting you know, you just tie up your dog next to your bed, which I feel that could work as well...”*. Participants suggested that they needed, *“...at least a safe place where we could tie up your dog without letting it being at risk of being stolen outside or being fed food by strangers, which is a big problem!”* One of the youth in this study, Max, talked about a drop-in centre in Saint John’s, Newfoundland, and although he could not remember the name, he did remember how inviting they were to him and his dog. This centre did not allow companion animals into the facility, but did provide a safe space outside (in a fenced backyard with

little to no public access, shade, and water bowls). Max discussed this organization very positively and relayed how just this one small gesture had such a large positive impact.

When it comes to issues of transportation the youth from this study also had plenty of suggestions on how to improve. For example Rachel proposed, *"...people who were on the streets had access to a certain patch or vest for their dog to show that they are homeless and they need to get their dog on public transportation."* She also advocated for a simple screening process that could be carried out at the transit station; *"So I feel like an initial screening process and then you just get a card and then you can just take them around."* All of the youth from this study felt that Metro Transit should change their animal policies by allowing them to take their companion animals aboard and all agreed that some type of test and issuing an identification card would be an excellent means of resolving this issue.

Some of the participants in this study expressed a feeling of being misunderstood, considered undesirable, and of being a scape goat for society in general. This can be seen in the statement from Cocoa, *"...most of the people that we know, because of the life that we've lived, a lot of people prosecute in general, ridicule, and you know, again, homeless people are scapegoats and stuff like that..."* and he also said, *"...through the mainstream, homeless people are deemed as like inhuman, you know what I mean?"* The participants from this study assert that education and awareness are crucial ingredients to improving relations between the homeless population and the general public and to decreasing prejudices against them. Coco discussed several marches and peaceful protests and indicated that such measures could assist with relations between homeless youth and the public. He states that, *"...a lot of people are not aware, or conscious of other peoples' lives; they don't put*

themselves (in others shoes), and they don't look, so I think raising awareness..." Most of the participants reported feeling judged by the general public and expressed a desire to have others keep comments to themselves.

Impression of Themes

Three of the themes from my study, that companion animals provide much needed emotional support for homeless youth (Lem et al., 2013; Melson, 2013; Thompson et al., 2006), that the pets of homeless youth offer protection and ensure their safety (Gaetz, 2004; Rew 2000; Taylor et al., 2004) and also gives youth a sense of responsibility and provide motivation to make healthier life choices (Labreque and Walsh, 2011; Rhoades et al., 2014), are well documented in current literature. The insights from this study, however, not only provide further evidence to strengthen the assertions of previous researchers, it also lends more detailed information and contributes to a deeper understanding of the concepts.

The fact that companion animals create unique barriers for youth experiencing homelessness is not new and has been relatively well documented (Kidd and Kidd, 1994; Lem et al., 2013; Lem et al., 2015). Sharing their life with a companion animal can cause street youth to be consistently rejected from necessities, such as housing options and public transportation and other forms of assistance, such as education or employment. Companion animals also have less obvious consequences such as taking resources, such as food and water, or by making the youth stand out more to the general public or law enforcement. The statements from the youth in this study provide an in-depth description of the specific challenges homeless youth with companion animals face on a regular basis.

This information could be helpful to those agencies serving homeless youth to assist them to overcome such obstacles

Another strong theme that emerged from this research was the consistent perception that street involved youth were targeted by law enforcement resulting in them being given far more tickets than other individuals for the same infractions, such as having dogs off leash in an unauthorized area or licensing violations. Many of the youth from my study reported incidents of unfair treatment by both the police and the general public, however, there has been little written about it. I was only able to find three relevant articles on the subject. In one of the few articles to be found on the subject, Tickets...Tickets and More Tickets: A Case Study of the Enforcement of the Ontario Safe Streets (Gaetz, O'Grady, & Buccieri, 2013), the authors reviewed the tickets given out under the Ontario Safe Streets Act between 2004 and 2010, which clearly showed an increase in tickets issued to street involved youth despite a reported decrease in panhandling and squeegeeing.

The second article I found was a study using data from participants enrolled in the At-Risk Youth Study (ARYS), which found that being homeless increased the likelihood of being confronted by police (Lianping, Wood, Shannon, Feng, Thomas, 2013). The final article, Policing the homeless: Policy, practice, and perceptions, reported on a survey of 100 police departments on their policies and practices around those experiencing homelessness which advanced understanding of the under studied relations between police officers and the homeless (McNamara, Crawford, & Burns, 2013). Reports from the participants from this study on the unfair treatment they have received from police

combined with these few articles suggest that the social dynamic and relations between homeless youth and law enforcement is in need of further examination. Add to this the lack of available research on the topic and it is clear that more investigation is needed into this important issue.

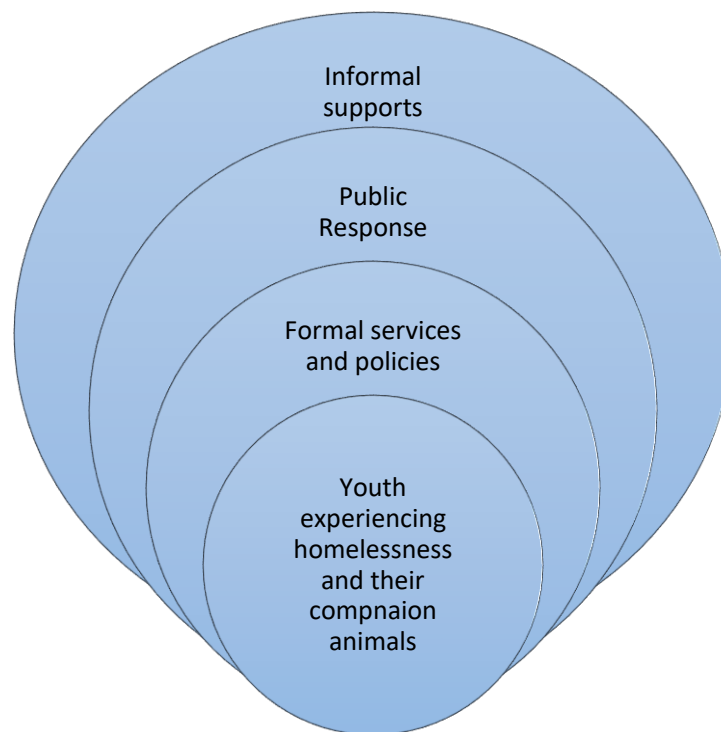
In the interviews participants were asked directly what they felt could be done to improve the situation for homeless youth with companion animals. The youth had many surprising and innovative suggestions for bettering their lives, including everything from an identification system that would allow those who are homeless or those who need emotional support animals to use public transportation during non-rush hour times to creating educational opportunities for the general public. Overall the participants reported a wide range of various solutions to the challenges they regularly encounter, most of which were thoughtful and realistic. Interestingly, in all my readings on the subject, I was unable to find research devoted to any self-reported suggestions to the challenges of homeless youth, let alone those with companion animals. It is vital that we listen to youth who actually experience these barriers, because if we opt for solutions we believe will help them, if we fall for ethnocentrism, then we likely will be of little assistance to them. Exploring the self-reported solutions to the barriers homeless youth with companion animals encounter is another vein of research that needs further inspection.

Meaning Making

The next step in the transcendental phenomenological process is *Imaginative Variation*. In this stage possible meanings are sought out through utilization of imagination and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). In

order to make meaning of the phenomenon of the relationship between homeless youth and companion animals, I considered all levels of influence from many different perspectives and angles. This included the view point of the youth and their companion animals, formal service providers and policies, such as shelters, drop-in centres and public transportation, responses from the general public, and informal supports, such as pet-friendly businesses and areas, such as off-leash dog parks. I reflected upon details from interviews from each participant and on discussions with many other sources, such as public transportation officials, service providers, and business owners in order to understand the combined experiences of homeless youth and their companion animals.

DIAGRAM 1: *Illustrates the levels of influence on youth experiencing homelessness and their companion animals*



Although companion animals are considered as mainly beneficial by the street involved young people interviewed for this study, they also recognized that living with a companion animal in their circumstances poses particular challenges. One participant, Max, a young man who had been transient since he was about sixteen, expresses a unique point of view. When he began travelling he felt little attachment to the companion animals, generally dogs that accompanied him and his friends. He describes his relationship with these dogs in the following manner, *"...so I started out travelling with dogs and I thought they were just like, I don't know this annoyance, like they were just there and you had to watch out for them, we couldn't ride buses with them..."* He is forthright about the obstacles those companion animals presented for him and his peers and states, *"Challenge, in that they slowed me down a lot. For like riding trains and stuff, they're a huge liability, they're stupid, they're loud, they take up space, they need food and water, lots of water, lots and lots of water..."* Although Max has since gone on to travel and bond with other companion animals and now passionately advocates for the benefits of sharing his life with them, he is candid and eloquent about the consequences of being homeless and sharing his life with pets.

Through review of the relevant literature and discussions with youth who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness and the professionals trying to assist them, it has become evident that pet ownership for those experiencing homelessness is a complicated matter. Like most phenomena, each aspect holds both positive and negative consequences. For example, when youth are travelling with a companion animal they need supplemental resources, such as food and water. This can have negative impacts, such as youth going without, but it can also have positive influences, such as much needed

emotional support and protection. The great concern most of the youth feel for their pets will often cause them to make extra preparations before heading out, for example taking more food or a tarp for protection. Another example of this would be that companion animals, particularly dogs, were reported by the youth to draw further attention toward them, often detrimental attention from law enforcement, including warning, tickets and arrests. On the other hand, knowing this situation, many youth report adjusting their behaviour, for example refraining from drug use or other illegal activity, in order to avoid these undesirable consequences. Although companion animals create specific challenges for youth experiencing homelessness, many of those challenges establish an opportunity for the youth to overcome them and become stronger through growth.

Other obstacles, such as no pet policies for public transportation and affordable housing, are more serious. All of the youth from this study and most of the literature report that housing and transportation issues have the most significant adverse impact. Even though all the participants from this study reported that their companion animal provided important benefits to them and that their situation would improve with the availability of pet-friendly services, organizations who offer or have historically offered such services may disagree. As part of this investigation I spoke with four organizations within Canada that either allows companion animals or allowed them in the past.

The first was ARK, a drop-in centre on Gottingen Street in Halifax, Nova Scotia that serves youth ages 16-24 years. This organization allows companion animals inside the building and to remain with their owners provided they are under their control at all times. All of the youth I spoke with were from this organization and felt very strongly about the

positive influence the organization played in their lives. ARK did not comment specifically on their experiences with youth and their companion animals, but were inviting and friendly.

The second organization was Shelter Nova Scotia, which operates several facilities including Sir Sanford Flemming House, Neiley House, The Rebuilding, Herring Cove Apartments, and the two historically pet-friendly homes Barry House and Metro Turning Point. In 2008, Barry House, which provides shelter for women and their dependent children, and Metro Turning point, which assists men experiencing homelessness, became pet-friendly. In 2015, after two years of difficult debate, Shelter Nova Scotia decided to revoke their pet-friendly policies. Reasons for making this decision included issues with aggressive animals, clients abandoning their pets or providing improper care for them, lack of adequate and suitable space in their buildings, and extra burden put onto staff, such as pet care and finding homes for animals that had been deserted. The implementation of the no pets policy coincided with the opening of the emergency shelter Out of the Cold, which allows companion animals, a factor they hoped would make the transition easier. Representatives from Shelter Nova Scotia expressed that although this decision was not made easily, it was necessary in order to fulfill their overriding operational needs.

A discussion with Jeff Karabanow (J. Karabanow, personal communication, February 25, 2016) from Out of the Cold revealed that although the emergency shelter, open only at night, does take companion animals, the organization required that they remain in kennels in a separate room from their owners. The emergency shelter is run out of Saint Matthews United Church in downtown Halifax, and thus because it was obviously not designed for

this purpose, it lacks adequate appropriate space for any other arrangements. The participants in this study, however, expressed a dislike for the policies at Out of the Cold, and many stated that they would not use this service for that reason. When discussing the shelter Kelsey stated, *“Yeah, I couldn’t bear to put Drake in a kennel because I have to sleep with him, so I’ve never gone there.”* As reported recently in The Signal, a newspaper run by the journalism students at the University of Kings College, Out of the Cold has recently changed its policies to require referrals and proof that individuals have pursued all other avenues of shelter. This means that accessing the only pet-friendly shelter in Halifax just got more difficult.

The fourth organization is one that came to my attention throughout the interviews conducted for this study. When asked about pet-friendly services, many of the youth mentioned an organization in Montreal, called Dans la Rue, which operates three facilities: Chez Pops, a Drop-in centre which services approximately 120 youth ages 16-25 years per day; The Bunker, a twenty bed emergency shelter assisting youth between the ages of 12-21 years old; and a recently added supervised apartment program. Chez Pops allows the youth to house their companion animals within the outdoor kennels they provide and offers other essential services such as free vet clinics once per month and a pet food bank. The Bunker allows the youth to keep their animals with them, even sleeping with them in their bunks, but pet are required to follow the same rules as the youth and will be removed and/or banned if they break them. The supervised apartments are not pet-friendly. A senior representative from Dans la Rue stated that the kennels at the drop-in center are almost always at capacity and the shelter houses approximately 2 or 3 companion animals per week.

The representative from Dans la Rue, a senior employee who has been with the organization for over eleven years, expressed his concerns over youth experiencing homelessness having companion animals. He says operating pet-friendly services for street involved youth is a double-edged sword. The youth experience many benefits, he admits, but he also recognizes that these youth have more disadvantages than those without pets. He also points out that many of the youth quickly pass the responsibility of their pets on to the organization, relying on these organizations for pet food and vet services making them further dependent on outside resources and less able to care for themselves. This representative also expressed his concern over continued patterns of abuse; youth who experienced abuse in their lives continue the pattern by abusing their companion animals (D. Dumouchel, personal communication, June 06, 2016). Giving credence to his argument is the fact that this pattern of abuse has also been well documented in relevant literature (Ascione, 1998; Flynn, 2000). After carefully considering the accounts from organizations assisting homeless youth it is evident that providing pet friendly services has many benefits and drawbacks; and, while it can be very rewarding, the demands of the companion animals can overload an already demanding situation.

That said the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing funding and support to Canadian communities, has recently allocated \$600 million to be spent between 2014 and 2019 to renew and refocus the HPS using a “Housing First” strategy (Report on Housing & Homelessness in HRM: 2013 (AHANS)). First popularized by Sam Tsemberis and Pathways to Housing in New York in the 1990s, the “Housing First” model is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on securing independent and permanent

housing for those experiencing homelessness and then providing additional supports and services as needed (Gaetz, 2014; Power, 2008). This approach operates in contrast to the traditional ‘Treatment First’ approaches whereby people experiencing homelessness are placed in emergency services and must address certain personal issues (e.g., addictions or mental health) prior to being deemed ‘ready’ for housing. Initial research on the At Home/Chez Soi demonstration in Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Moncton, on using the “Housing First” model with adults with mental health illness and addictions has demonstrated the model’s effectiveness. The majority of participants in this study, approximately 80 percent, were successfully housed and improved in other outcomes after one year compared to those using a ‘Treatment First’ model (Gaetz, 2014). Success of this method is encouraging, but there still exists the question of how best to offer ‘Housing First’ services to street involved youth with pets when companion animals are usually prohibited in shelters, most rental housing, other service providers’ buildings, and on public transportation.

This issue of when and how to offer pet friendly services illustrates the need for innovative interventions when working with youth experiencing homelessness and their companion animals. In 2012, Allie Phillips founded and developed the Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T™) program that provides a start-up guide for organizations wanting to help people and their pets (retrieved from www.alliephillips.com, June 24, 2015). Although this program was originally designed for use in women’s shelters, it is being utilized in an increasing array of domestic shelters in North America and could be used across a broad range of other services. Programs such as these are beginning to

surface and provide valuable information for those wanting to incorporate pet friendly services to homeless youth.

Another Halifax organization, Homeward Bound City Pound, was brought to my attention through a few of the local homeless shelters because they had provided them with assistance in the past. A representative of the Homeward Bound City Pound stated that on a few occasions over the past two years, law enforcement had brought companion animals to them when they needed a place to stay for a few days while their human got settled. The representative stated that the animals have ranged from dogs and cats to birds, such as a parrot, and that there were a variety of situations where this service might be needed, including incarceration, domestic abuse or homelessness. Although this service is not being utilized regularly at the moment, it is an avenue that could be pursued further.

It is becoming increasingly evident that in order to truly assist street involved pet-owning youth, services and programs will need to strive to understand the strength of these human-animal relationships and the benefits companion animal ownership offers these young people. It would be valuable for those attempting to assist homeless youth attached to companion animals to consider accepting their pets into facilities in order to allow the youth to utilize, often their best and only, source of family.

Although it was not discussed at length, one of the participants from this study discussed the relief some youth feel when their companion animals are relinquished. All companion animals, and in particular dogs, are a big commitment that require among other things, time, sacrifice, patience and money. Shelters are filled with companion animals that have been abandoned by their humans; and like so many of us, street involved youth

sometimes acquire an animal without thinking through all the consequences and are then overwhelmed by the responsibility. While many youth report being devastated by the forced relinquishment of their companion animal, to some it may be a relief; a way to give up a burden they are not prepared for without having admit to it.

Another issue discussed by the youth in their interviews was the controversial subject of service and emotional support animals. Many of the street involved youth with companion animals discussed using illegitimate service animal identification as a means of accessing transportation and/or entering public areas. Service animals are specifically trained companion animals that assist their humans with a particular issue, such as epilepsy, post-traumatic stress disorder, or anxiety. Using false support animal identification was reported by the youth in this study as one of the few coping mechanisms available to them, but now in Nova Scotia it has become much more difficult to use.

On April 22, 2016 Nova Scotia passed legislation that introduces a certification process for service or emotional support animals, named the Service Dog Act, intended to decrease the difficulties associated with discrimination of people who rely on service dogs (Government of Nova Scotia, Department of Justice, News Release, 2016). The Act will establish a registrar to oversee applications, certification, and identification standards for support animals. It also will provide outlines for specific training, temperament, and health requirements each animal would need to meet before animal and handler are issued an identification card which would ensure their admission to all businesses and services while also ensuring the safety of others. The legislation is meant to provide those using legitimate service animals, business owners, and service providers with clear rules and

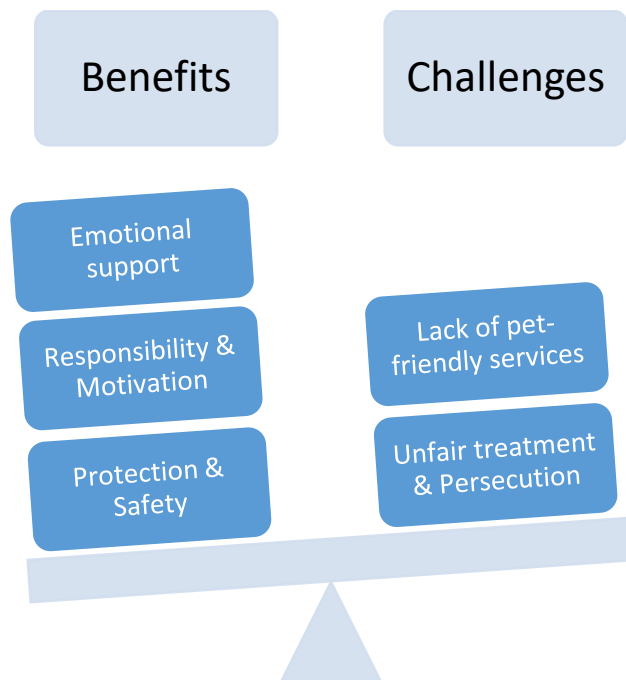
protection under those rules. It also outlines penalties for denying the rights of those using service animals and for falsely representing a service dog team.

Although the fees for these services have yet to be determined, many of the youth I interviewed discussed their concerns about the costs associated with accessing the training, grooming, veterinary care, and licensing needed to get certification as a legitimate service dog. Considering that most of these youth were relying on community organizations for many of their own necessities, it is unlikely they would have the money to establish their dog as a service or support animal. Several of the youth I interviewed directly discussed their dog's role in easing their social anxiety and appear to meet the general regulations for a service dog team, yet because of the associated costs none of these youth would even be able to consider certification. Add to this yet another fine, this time for falsely representing a service dog team, for street involved youth to contend with, and this well-intentioned legislation may become oppressive for them. It is possible that this legislation will not only negatively impact street involved youth, but also anyone with limited financial means. These issues will need to be addressed by the Nova Scotia Government, perhaps establishing a fund for those in need.

It seems that, although young people who are bonded with their companion animals receive many benefits from their pets, such as unconditional emotional support, protection, and responsibility and motivation to be healthier and safer, they also provide several unique barriers and challenges which the youth themselves have identified, such as finding shelter, transportation and avoiding unfair treatment and persecution from law enforcement and the general public. Service providers who have in the past or now

provide pet-friendly services have also experienced both the positive influence of companion animals, and the negative outcomes, including animal abandonment, aggressive animals, and a lack of suitable pet-friendly housing once clients leave the organization, all of which make providing pet-friendly services problematic. Despite the supplemental barriers having a companion animal poses, they provide a sense of family, hope and happiness, and often a reason to carry on for many youth experiencing homelessness; and the obstacles brought on by sharing their lives with companion animals are usually met with such determination that they can assist in building strength and resiliency.

DIAGRAM 3: *Illustrates the cost benefit analysis of sharing your life with companion animals while experiencing homelessness*



Unified Statement of the Phenomenon

The final step in transcendental phenomenological process is to integrate these textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the foundations of experiences of the phenomenon as a whole. I, therefore, considered all the data from the study, including the formal interviews with the youth, informal exchanges with service providers, and relevant literature, and used this information to create the following unified description of the phenomenon of the relationship between homeless youth and their companion animals.

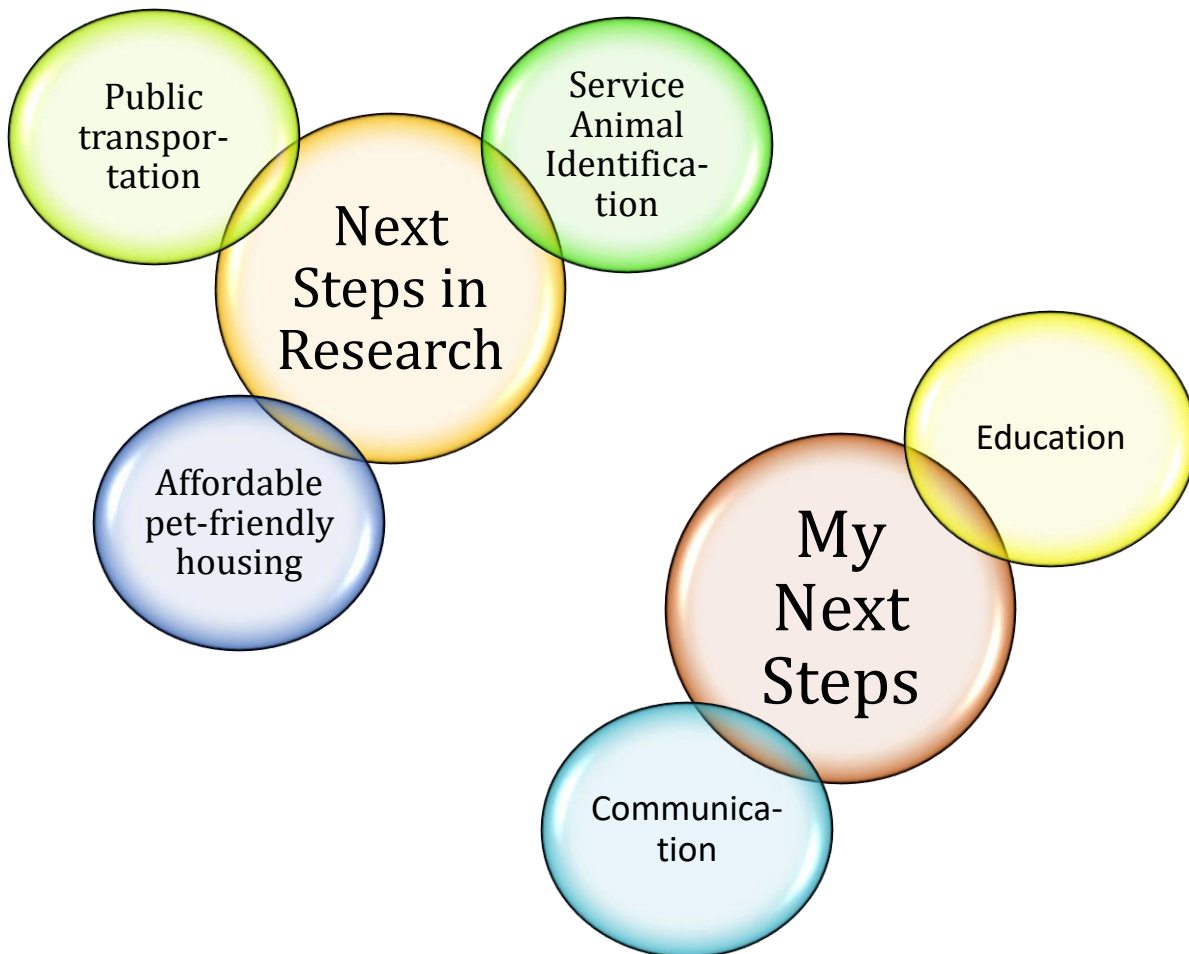
Although sharing their life with a companion animal is regarded by the youth as enormously positive, they were also aware of the unique challenges that exist for them. The participants of this study discussed issues of transportation, finding shelter, and using services, as well as being targeted by law enforcement and the general public. Also, animal theft and animal endangerment are two serious issues for youth experiencing homelessness with pets. Finally, when faced with these challenges street youth have limited coping mechanisms. One coping strategy reportedly often used by street involved youth is illegitimate service animal identification. This is an issue fraught with controversy, however, it has been a successful strategy used by street youth with pets in the past in order to gain necessary services. Unfortunately for these youth, new stricter guidelines for service animals are soon coming into effect, which will cut off one of the few coping mechanisms for travelling with their pet that they have.

Overall, the youth experiencing homelessness who were interviewed for this study reported that sharing their lives with companion animals was extremely constructive and

beneficial, providing emotional support, companionship, safety and protection, and motivation for making better life choices, such as refraining from drug use and illegal activity. The young people from this study were also aware and openly recognized that having a companion animal would cause unique challenges in their lives. They reported that their pets have affected their lives for the best and that pet-friendly services aimed at assisting them would greatly increase their ability and desire to seek aid to improve their lives. The knowledge gained from this study may assist service providers to better understand and support youth with pets that are experiencing homelessness.

CHAPTER 5: NEXT STEPS

DIAGRAM1: Illustrates areas in need of further development



Next Steps in Research

Throughout the participants' interviews, several concepts continually arose that would benefit from further investigation. The first of these issues and the one that was most talked about by the participants was public transportation. Youth experiencing

homelessness rely on public transportation; but, when they cannot take their companion animals with them they are often left with few options and sometimes this can put them in dangerous situations. The second matter is shelter/housing. Most shelters designed for those experiencing homelessness in Halifax are not pet-friendly and most rental or low-income housing does not allow companion animals either. It has been documented that homeless youth with companion animals are regularly rejected from housing options because their pet is not permitted (Singer et al., 1995) and all of the participants from the current study discussed the housing challenges they have encountered because of their companion animals. Despite this fact, most homeless people with pets have reported that they would not leave their pet regardless of the consequences for themselves (Lem et al., 2013) and again the participants from this study concurred. This makes the issue of housing extremely important. The final concern is in response to the previous two; in order to overcome the housing and transportation barriers these homeless youth confront, they sometimes use illegitimate service animal identification. New legislation passed in Nova Scotia will soon make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for youth to falsely pose as service dog teams and may even invoke a hefty financial penalty for doing so. It may be valuable to investigate how this new legislation will affect homeless youth and their companion animals and perhaps how it can be useful to them.

Public Transportation

According to Metro Transit (HRM Customer Service Representative, June 9, 2016, personal communication), companion animals are only allowed on buses and ferries if they are contained within a proper kennel at all times and do not interfere in any way with

other passengers; however, even if all of these requirements are met it is still up to the transit drivers discretion whether or not to allow the animal. In many ways these rules makes sense, companion animals can present specific issues, such as allergies and aggression, and it is important to protect all passengers. On the other hand, it is important to meet the needs of all the passengers who use a public transportation system.

Recently Halifax held a public event entitled, “Downtown...I’m in!” aimed at gaining ideas from residents for making the urban core more liveable. All of the suggestions made by residents can be found on the HRM website (<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/documents/StaffReportDIIMerged.pdf>); however, one of the significant suggestions was to “make downtown more dog-friendly” and to “allow dogs on the ferry”. In light of this information, it appears that allowing companion animals on public transportation is a concern of great importance to many of the residents in our city, not just the homeless youth who desperately rely on the service, and every one of the participants in the current study identified public transportation as a major challenge. In response to this recommendation, Metro Transit will soon conduct a review of the transit practices in Canada and around the globe. Representatives from Metro Transit have recognized that companion animals are permitted to travel with their owners all around the world and they want to know how they do it.

Considering that several of the young people I interviewed relayed stories of troublesome situations that occurred because they could not get their companion animals on public transportation, it is worthy of further scrutiny. Kelsey and Rachel both discussed being forced into hitchhiking because they had no other means of transportation; Max

talked about how limiting travel is when you have a companion animal with you; while all of the participants praised the public transportation system in Toronto and wondered why we cannot do the same in Halifax. A review of the common practices of transit organizations throughout Canada is a great first step at making public transportation more accessible, not only for youth experiencing homelessness, but for all residents in Halifax.

Housing

Since most Canadian shelters designed for people experiencing homelessness do not permit companion animals, nor does most low-income housing, homeless youth often have limited options. They are left with the difficult decision to relinquish their beloved pet in order to put a roof over their head or remain with their animal but forgo assistance with shelter. It is a difficult choice to have to make, and considering that research has illustrated that people will more often than not choose to stay with their pets, it is vital that the barrier that companion animals create for the homeless youth that share their lives with them is investigated further.

Providing pet-friendly housing options is a complicated matter with both benefits and negative consequences and is certainly not to be taken on casually. Through talking with those who provide services to homeless young people it is clear that there can be challenges including aggressive animals, allergies, and improper care of the animal by the youth, which need to be addressed. Fortunately programs such as SAF-T™ are being created that provide organizations wanting to offer pet-friendly services with detailed instructions. Further study and evaluation of such programs would be helpful in determining how best to provide services to homeless youth with companion animals.

Service Animal Identification

As stated earlier, many of the participants from the current study reported using illegitimate service dog identification as a means of accessing public areas where their dogs would not normally be allowed to accompany them, for example public transportation. Although the issue of falsely impersonating a service dog team is controversial, so much more so now that the province just passed new legislature surrounding it, it is unclear how often and by how many this approach is used. Delving deeper into this area of study would help to give a better estimate of how this new legislation will affect homeless youth and their companion animals. It would also be helpful to investigate what other tactics homeless youth and their pets might be able to use in order to gain access to the important services they need.

These three concepts, public transportation, housing, and service animal identification were identified by the participants in the current research and by service providers as areas needing further study, which would help to improve the services offered to homeless youth and their companion animals.

My Next Steps

Many of the youth I spoke with emphasized the need for greater communication, education, and public awareness of the relationship between homeless youth and their companion animals. It is my job now to share what I have learned with as many people and groups as I can. First I will condense this study into a journal article and submit it for publication in a relevant academic journal publication. Second, I will take any opportunity to present the results of this study to the general public, for example at dog shows, public

library events, or other community events. Finally, I will formally discuss this issue with other community service providers, for example at professional development conferences or presentations. Through these actions I hope to help educate others on the incomparable strength and value of the bond between a young person and a beloved companion animal.

The Willow Tree Concluded

By nightfall the warm spring afternoon had turned chilly and because Halifax is a coastal city the fog had rolled in thick and damp, covering everything with a thin coat of cold moisture. Eliza had squeegeed at the Willow Tree intersection until around 8:30pm when darkness set in and it was no longer safe because cars couldn't really see her on the road. She and her dog, Bingley, headed for a bench on the Commons adjacent to the Willow Tree to count there earning, a whopping \$14.80 for the day. Sighing Eliza bends down and hugs Bingley, "It's not much buddy, but it'll get us supper." In response Bingley wags his tail happily and licks her face. The duo then begin walking to the SuperStore, where Eliza knows she can buy a decent bag of dog food for Bingley and still have enough left over to get herself a burger at the McDonald's just a couple of blocks past the grocery store.

After supper, Eliza and Bingley wait patiently until it is safe for them to make their way to their favorite sleeping spot; an alcove in the office building on the corner of Quinpool Road and Robie Street. The nook offers privacy after 10pm, as it was usually deserted from then until dawn, and the awning overhead offers some protection from inclement weather. When they arrive, Eliza and Bingley settle into their sleeping bag and arrange the tarp over them, then snuggle up for warmth and comfort. It's been a hard day

and Eliza soon feels herself drifting off to sleep, but then she hears shuffled footsteps nearby and peeks her head out. She can see the outline of a bulky man, weaving unevenly toward her. Eliza tenses and Bingley leaps out of the sleeping bag, barking and snarling. The man yelps in surprise and nearly topples over, clearly startled by the dogs warning. Gaining his footing the man quickly turns and walks away in the other direction. Eliza throws her arms around her dog and kisses his face, "Thank you Bingley, again", she whispers into her companion animals' ear. Then they snuggle down and sleep as best they can for the night.

Having left Eliza after their quarrel, Tony, because he didn't have a companion animal to care for, was able to pick up a few hours of work at a construction site. He was paid \$40 under the table for his efforts. Then he took Metro Transit to a local Church Supper and filled his belly with a good hot meal. Afterwards Tony and a friend went out to a bar to watch a band and have a couple of beers. Earlier Tony had registered at the Phoenix Youth Shelter and intended to spend the night there; all things Eliza was not able to do because Bingley would not be permitted on public transportation, or in most shelters, businesses, and soup kitchens.

Unfortunately, Tony suffers from depression and substance abuse and has difficulty controlling his emotions, particularly anger. Still upset from his earlier argument with Eliza and having no one to talk to, Tony got into a physical altercation with another man at the bar and ended up sleeping in the holding cell at the police station. Thankfully Tony did not have Bingley with him that night because he most likely would have been taken to a

local shelter possibly to be rehomed or even worst case scenario, destroyed - a relinquishment that is often traumatic for many youth in this situation.

These fictional accounts are based on the research I have completed over the previous years and provide realistic examples of both the benefits and challenges for youth experiencing homelessness with companion animals. As can be seen from the story above and this study, the relationship between homeless youth and their companion animals plays a vital role in mental and physical health. And although companion animals provide unique and challenging barriers to receiving assistance, they also offer an effective tool for improving the lives of the youth directly and for service providers to utilize when assisting these youth.

REFERENCES:

- (The) Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia. (2013) Report on housing and homelessness in HRM: 2013. Retrieved on 25/05/2015 from <http://www.ahans.ca/2013ReportHousingHomelessnessHRM.pdf>
- Anderson, K.L., & Olson, M.R. (2003). The value of a dog in a classroom of children with severe emotional disorders. *Anthrozoos*. 19, pp. 35-49
- Ascione, F.R. (1998) Battered women's reports of their partners' and their children's cruelty to animals. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*. 1(1), pp. 119-133
- Bender, K., Thompson, S.J., McManus, H., Lantry, J., & Flynn, P.M. (2007) Capacity for survival: Exploring strengths of homeless street youth. *Child and Youth Care Forum*. 36(1), pp. 25-42
- Brandon, M.D.L. & Hadland, S.E. (2012) The immediate and lasting effects of adolescent homelessness on suicidal ideation and behavior. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 51(5), pp. 407-408
- Buckner, J.C, Bassuk, E.L., Weinreb, L.F. (2001). Predictors of academic achievement among homeless and low-income housed children. *Journal of School Psychology* 39, pp. 45–69
- Bukowsli, K. & Buetow, S. (2011). Making the invisible visible: A photovoice exploration of homeless women's health and lives in Central Auckland. *Social Science & Medicine*. 72(5), pp. 739-746

- Busen, N.H. & Engebretson, J.C. (2008). Facilitating risk reduction among homeless and street-involved youth. *Journal of American Academic Nurse Practitioners*. 20(11), pp. 567–575
- Cheng, T, Wood, E, Feng, C, Mathias, S, Montaner, J, KoraDeBeck, T. K. (2013). Transitions into and out of homelessness among street-involved youth in a Canadian setting. *Health & Place*. 23, pp. 122– 127
- Choquette, H. (2015) A Dog's Life. Retrieved electronically on June 30, 2016 from <http://boxoffice.hotdocs.ca/WebSales/pages/info.aspx?evtinfo=50901~edeed7b8-5598-4ac6-994a-ca71bc407bc4&epguid=1982376d-17a7-4bb4-9959-f38bb053d10d&>
- Downtown...I'm in! Urban Core Community Engagement Event (2014) Retrieved on June 10, 2016 from <http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/documents/StaffReportDIIMerged.pdf>
- Edidin, J.P., Ganim, Z., Hunter, S.J., Karnik, N.S. (2012). The mental and physical health of Homeless youth: a literature review. *Child Psychiatry Human Development*. 43(3), pp. 354-375
- Karabanow, J. (2006). Becoming a street kid: Exploring the stages of street life. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*. 13(2), pp. 49-72
- Karabanow, J. (2004). Exploring salient issues of youth homelessness in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Retrieved on 20/06/2015 from [http://www.pictoucountyrootsforyouth.com/uploads/8/0/6/5/8065185/salient issues of youth homelessness in halifax.pdf](http://www.pictoucountyrootsforyouth.com/uploads/8/0/6/5/8065185/salient_issues_of_youth_homelessness_in_halifax.pdf)

- Farah, M.J., Shera, D.M., Savage, J.H., Betancourt, L., Giannetta, J.M., Brodsky, N.L. (2006)
- Childhood poverty: specific associations with neurocognitive development. *Brain Res* 1110:166–174
- Ferguson, K.M. (2009) Exploring family environment characteristics and multiple abuse experiences among homeless youth. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 24, pp.1875–1891
- Flynn, C.P. (2000) Why family professionals can no longer ignore violence toward animals. *Family Relations*. 49, pp. 87-95
- Friedmann, E. & Son, H. (2009) The Human-Companion Animal Bond: How humans benefit. *Veterinary Clinic North America Small Animal Practice*. 39(2), pp. 293-326
- Friedman, E., Katcher, A.H., Thomas, S.A., Lynch, J.J., Messent, P.R. (1983) Social interaction and blood pressure: Influence of animal companions. *Journal of Nervous Mental Disorders*. 171(8), pp. 461-465
- Gaetz, S., O'Grady, B., & Buccieri, K. (2010) Surviving crime and violence street youth and victimization in Toronto. *Justice for Children and Youth*. *Street youth Legal Services.* *Justice for Children and Youth*
- Gaetz, S., O'Grady, B., Buccieri, K. (2013) Tickets...and more tickets: A case study of the enforcement of the Ontario Safe Streets Act. *Canadian Public Policy Analyse de Politiques*. 39(4), pp. 541-558

- Gaetz, S.A. (2014) A safe and decent place to live: Towards a Housing First framework for youth. *Toronto: The Homeless Hub Press*
- Glicken, M. (2003). Social research: A simple guide. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Groton, Danielle. (2013) Are housing first programs effective? A Research Note. *Journal of Sociology and social welfare*.
- Johnson, T.P., Aschkenasy, J.R., Herbers, M.R., Gillenwater, S.A. (1996) Self-reported risk factors for AIDS among homeless youth. *AIDS Education Preview* 8, pp. 308–322
- Johnson, G & Chamberlain, C. (2008) From youth to adult homelessness. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*. 43(4), pp. 563-582
- Kamieniecki, G.W. (2001) Prevalence of psychological distress and psychiatric disorders among homeless youth in Australia: a comparative review. *Australia New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*. 35, pp. 352–358
- Kidd, A.H. & Kidd, R.M. (1994) Benefits and liabilities of pets for the homeless. *Psychological Reports*. 74(3), pp. 715-722
- Kings Journalism The Signal (2015). Retrieved on June 21, 2016 from <http://signalhfx.ca/halifax-out-of-the-cold-shelter-no-longer-first-come-first-served-now-based-on-referrals/>

Koeller, R. (2005) Background Report: Homeless and Street-Involved Youth in HRM.

Retrieved 25/05/2015 from

<http://homeless.samhsa.gov/ResourceFiles/wm2nn1pa.pdf>

Lacoff, S.L. (2000) Boris M. Levinson: A historical perspective. A focus on his work involving animal-assisted psychotherapy. *DAI-B 61/05, Dissertation Abstracts International*

Labrecque, J. & Walsh, C.A. (2011) Homeless women's voices on incorporating companion animals into shelter services. *Anthrozoos*. 24(1), pp. 79-95

Lem, M. Coe, J.B., Haley, D.B. (2013) Effects of companion animal ownership among Canadian street-involved youth: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*. 40(4), pp.285-304

Lem, M., Coe, J., Haley, D., Stone, E., O'Grady, W. (2016) The Protective Association between Pet Ownership and Depression among Street-involved Youth: A Cross-sectional Study. *Anthrozoos*. 29(1), pp. 123-136

Levinson, B.M. (1965) Pet Psychotherapy: Use of household pets in the treatment of Behavior disorder in childhood. *Psychological Reports*. 17, pp. 695-698

Lianping, T., Wood, E., Shannon, K., Feng, C., Kerr, T. (2013) Police confrontations among street-involved youth in a Canadian setting. *The International Journal on Drug Policy*. 24(1), pp. 46-51

- McNamara, R., Crawford, C., Burns, R. (2013) Policing the homeless: Policy, practice, and perceptions. *An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*. 36(2), pp. 357-374
- Mallett, S., Rosenthal, D., Keys, D. (2005) Young people, drug use and family conflict: pathways into homelessness. *Journal of Adolescence* 28, pp.185–199
- Mallon, G. (1993). A study of the interactions between men, women, and dogs at the ASPCA in New York City. *Anthrozoos*, 6(1), 43-48.
- Mallon, G.P. (1994) Cow as co-therapist: Utilization of farm animals as therapeutic aides with children in residential treatment. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*. 11(6), pp. 455-474
- May, J. (2000) Housing Histories and Homeless Careers: A Biographical Approach. *Housing Studies*, 15(4), pp. 613-638.
- McConnell, E. (2002). Myths and facts...about animal assisted therapy. *Nursing*. 32(3), pp. 76
- Melson, G.F. (2003). Child development and the human-companion animal bond. *The American Behavioral Scientist*. 47(1), pp. 31-39
- Melson, G.F. (2000). Fostering interconnectedness with animals and nature: The developmental benefits for children. Paper presented to Green Chimneys people, pets, and plants conference, Brewster, New York.

- Meltzer (2012) Children who run away from home: risks for suicidal behavior and substance misuse. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 51, pp. 415-421
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Odendaal, J.S.J. (2000) Animal-assisted therapy – magic or medicine? *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*. 49(4), pp. 275-280
- Parks, R.W., Stevens, R.J., Spence, S.A. (2007) A systematic review of cognition in homeless children and adolescents. *Journal of Relational Social Medicine* 100, pp. 46–50
- Pollack, K.M., Fratthoroli, S., Whitehill, J.M., Strother, K. Youth. (2011) Perspectives on street outreach workers: Results from a community-based survey. *Journal of Community Health*. 36, pp. 469-476
- Power, A. (2008) *Housing: Housing First*. Retrieved 27/06/2015 from <http://www.homelesshub.ca/housingfirst>
- Phillips, A. (2012) Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T™). Retrieved 07/02/2015 from http://alliephillips.com/saf-tprogram/?doing_wp_cron=1436459753.6263079643249511718750
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2006). Street youth in Canada: Finding from enhanced surveillance of Canadian street youth, 1999-2003 (March, 2006). Retrieved 02/06/2015 from http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/reports_06/pdf/street_youth_e.pdf

- Rafferty, Y., Shinn, M., Weitzman, B.C. (2004) Academic achievement among formerly homeless adolescents and their continuously housed peers. *Journal of School Psychology*. 42, pp. 179–199
- Rew, L. (2000) Friends and pets as companions: Strategies for coping with loneliness among homeless youth. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*. 13(3), pp. 125-140
- Rhoades, H., Winetrobe, H. Rice, E. (2014) Pet ownership among homeless youth: Associations with mental health, service utilization, and housing status. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*. 46(2), pp. 237-244
- Roy, E., Haley, N., Leclerc, P., Sochanski, B., Boudreau, J., Bovin, J. (2004) Mortality on a cohort of street youth in Montreal. *Journal of AMA* 292, pp.569–574
- Rubin DH, Erickson CJ, San Agustin M, Cleary SD, Allen JK, Cohen P (1996) Cognitive and academic functioning of homeless children compared with housed children. *Pediatrics* 87, pp. 289–294
- Rhule-Louie, D.M; Bowen, S; Baer, J.S; Peterson, P.L (2008) Substance use and health and safety among homeless youth. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. 17, pp. 306–319
- Serpell, J.A. (2000) Animal companions and human well-being: An historical exploration of the value of human-animal relationships. In A. Fine (Ed.), *Animal assisted therapy*, (pp. 3-18) San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

- Singer, R.S, Hart, L.A., Zasloff, R.L. (1995) Dilemmas associated with rehousing homeless people who have companion animals. *Psychological Reports*. 77, pp. 851-857
- Slesnick, N. & Prestopnik, J. (2005) Dual and multiple diagnosis among substance using runaway youth. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*. 1, pp. 179-201
- Snow, D. & Anderson I. (1993) *Down on their luck: A study of street homeless people*, Berkeley. Los Angeles. London: University of California Press.
- Taylor, H., Williams, P., Gray, D. (2004). Homelessness and dog ownership: an investigation into animal empathy, attachment, crime, drug use, and public opinion. *Anthrozoos*. 17(4), pp. 353-368
- Thompson, S.J., McManus, H., Lantry, J., Windsor, L., Flynn, P. (2006). Insights from the street: Perceptions of services and providers by homeless young adults. *Evaluation and Program Planning*. 29(1), pp. 34-43
- Wrate, R. & McLoughlin, P. (1997) Feeling bad: the troubled lives and health of single young homeless people in Edinburgh. Primary Care Services, Lothian Health, Edinburgh
- Wolch, J., Dear, M., and Akita, A. (1998) Explaining Homelessness. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 54(4), pp. 443-454.
- Zasloff, R.L. & Hart, L.A. (1999) Animals in elementary school education in California. *Journal of Applied Animal Welfare Science*. 2(4), pp. 347-357

TABLES:

Table 1 – Significant Statements

Table 1- Significant Statements

- “...we’re both very emotionally dependent on each other.”
- “...we both get separation anxiety when we’re taken away from each other for too long”
- “...I sleep with him every night, like I can’t sleep without him.”
- “I trust him before I trust any human, for sure.”
- “He’s saved me from getting mugged on the street, he’s saved me from coyotes attacking, he’s kept me warm when I was outside in the winter...”
- “...generally he’s by my side the entire day and like I often feel a lot of anxiety about leaving him outside of stores...”
- “...I’ve had people try to steal him before, so...”
- “...when I was on the street I was like an alcoholic, a severe alcoholic, so like I drank every day, but never to a point where like I wouldn’t be able to take care of him properly, like he was kind of my anchor in that sense.”
- “...before I got him I was into a lot of other drugs and stuff like that, and when I first got him I quit all drugs cold turkey and I only drank after. So I haven’t touched drugs since I got him as a puppy.”
- “...he is too precious for me to have him taken away from me.”
- “...I can’t take him on the bus...”
- “..., I was trapped there because I had a dog, and there was no way out of there I had to hitchhike.”

- “..., it’s like having a kid, so he has taught me responsibility and discipline that I never would have learned before...”
- “...he helped me to quit all the drugs I was doing...”
- “...he’s my best friend...”
- “...he’s like always been my emotional support, so if I need a shoulder to cry on, (laughter) he’s there.”
- “..., also training him has definitely helped...”
- “..., I think that I would definitely have taken a lot more risks...”
- “And I definitely wouldn’t have taken care of myself or taken the proper gear on the road...”
- “...people have tried to mug me a couple of time and because my dog jumped out of my sleeping bag growling at them they backed off and left.”
- “...like I had a few issues, like hitchhiking and being hit on and stuff, and like that probably one thing that really pushed me to get a dog...”
- “...I think there is probably a lot of bias opinions like that.”
- “...like they’re much less likely to rob a sleeping person if that person has a dog chained to them that’s barking at them...”
- “I think that all of them absolutely should. It would help a lot of people. Um a lot of people sleep outside in the wintertime because they have their dog and they can’t take it into the shelter; I have before.”
- “...people steal dogs, people steal dogs specifically outside of drop-in centres.”
- “...regular people will look at that and they will say, “oh these people can’t take care of a dog, like they’re on the street they shouldn’t even have an animal”, things like that...”
- “...a lot of people on the street will be put in jail over tickets they can’t pay, just because they can’t get places with their animal.”
- “...if people who were on the streets had access to a certain patch or vest for their dog to show that they are homeless and they need to get their dog on public transportation.”

- “...people have kids, I love them just as much as somebody would love their children.”
- “...it’s hard to explain how much you love them.”
- “...unless I’m going out, to like dinner or something, I just pretty much bring ‘em, everywhere they go with me.”
- “.... I was addicted to heroin for six years and pretty much the only thing that stuck me being off it was like my dogs...”
- “...I definitely like learned a lot of responsibility...”
- “...Like having them (dogs)taught me like patience
- “...when I was a kid I was just like I don’t care about anything, and like I’m indestructible and stuff, and now like when I’m doing stuff I think about how it will affect my dogs and their life.”
- “I think that a public transit should be allowed pets.”
- “People like rely on (their animals) like, even if like their animals aren’t service animals, there are some people like me that have very bad anxiety, or other issues that like can’t get a service card for them, but like we need the comfort of having them and...”
- “...in that building there’s not even like windows so like you can see and stuff, and like some of the kids that go there have like gone outside and tried to feed the dogs stuff...”
- “...Pitbull mixes like, especially they get stolen a lot!”
- “...Well, I think like for public transit, people like, each city does it their own way, but Toronto is very progressive with stuff like that...”
- “...when I was younger and stuff in the Commons like the cops would only target the traveller kids, ‘cause like we’d be there and have our dogs off-leash and get tickets for having our dogs off-leash, but now, like after a couple of years ago, when I came back to Halifax like everybody has their dogs off-leash but they definitely aren’t giving them tickets,

but like being a traveller or like homeless you are definitely targeted a lot more and your pets are targeted a lot more for that reason.”

- Shelters absolutely don’t allow pets...which is, pretty much like just cuts off any of that kind of help when you are travelling.”
- “...when I came back like I had service jackets for them just hoping that like they’d just pass me through.”
- “...make a separate room for dog owners that they could sleep with them and stuff...”
- “Like nobody just wants to leave their dog in a room and like not know what is going on with them and stuff”
- “I view us as sister in a way, you know like I’ll take care of you, you take care of me, you know like we’ve got each other’s back.”
- “She brings a lot of joy into my life.”
- “...like she’s my whole world.”
- “...I got into a little bit of troubles last year, with just like legal stuff and um it wasn’t really looking that good ... and um I think like the biggest reason why I wanted to like fight it and to like just get through it was just because of my dog. You know, I don’t want to lose my dog and I told that to everyone. It was extremely important to me.”
- “...if I had it my way we’d go everywhere together.”
- “...we have a lot of um friends around with dogs as well, so we get the dogs together to play...”
- “...they are very perceptive and they can just pick up on emotions so well.”
- “...she’s always on my side, she’s always got my back. And um like whenever you kind of feel like you’re alone, or if feel like I’m alone she’s always there, so like I’m not technically alone.”

- “I feel like she’s helped me like develop into the person I am, or I am growing into a lot. Just by giving me responsibility, and just support right?”
- “Yeah, she definitely knows when I’m feeling down...or scared.”
- (without my companion animal) “...it would be like a big empty void in my life, it would be so sad.”
- “Like you know I don’t see why the buses don’t allow dogs if they’re well-behaved and friendly...”
- “...but services, like community services, I think it should be open for that... And because like they make a lot of people feel more safe, and if you feel safe it will make it a lot more easier to get through what you are going through.”
- “So I feel like an initial screening process and then you just get card and then you can just take them around.”
- “...a lot of shelters they will put the dogs somewhere different from where you are sleeping, which I understand why they are doing that, but it doesn’t work for all dogs and like it actually excludes a lot of people in the long run because the dog has separation anxiety and that’s not going to work.”
- “...just letting you know, you just tie up your dog next to your bed, which I feel that could work as well...”
- “...whenever I do take my dog and I have to tie her out front there’s always some danger because people steal dogs, for some reason, they take peoples dogs.”
- “I’d just like to add that, especially in HRM, um it’s really difficult, like even just finding housing... Yeah, that will accept dogs, yeah.”
- “...we’re best friends.”
- “...we spend twenty-four-seven with each other pretty much, ah, she goes everywhere with me...”

- “She’s definitely helped me get through some pretty tough times...”
- “...she’s my best friend. She means the world to me...”
- “...she’s like having a kid. I don’t have my own children, so she’s like a having a child, I guess.”
- “I’d feel lost without her.”
- “...I take her with me and we go meet up with friends who also have dogs and we usually go to the park and go out and have a couple of hours of play time...”
- “I’m definitely less depressed.”
- “...instead of being sad in my bed, she gets me out of the house and she puts a smile on my face and yup, she’s definitely helped a lot with my depression and like my social anxiety like that I have outside. I feel a lot calmer when she’s with me.”
- “...she’s affected my life for the best, I don’t know what I’d be doing right now without her...”
- “...that’s definitely happened to a few people’s dogs, ah, being taken away from them just because they are homeless, which is terrible.”
- I’ve had a few friends with dogs that were stolen.”
- “I think public transit should definitely allow dogs on the bus, like it works quite well in Toronto you’re allowed to let dogs on transit there, just not during rush hour, and they never have problems, I don’t see why other cities have a problem with accepting dogs on the bus.”
- “I feel like housing is a major issue, for being able to look for apartments having animals is a big issue ... but it’s definitely makes it a lot harder for youth on the streets to get apartments having a dog.”
- “...having more off-leash parks would also be really good...”

- “...I’ve gotten tickets even though there’s been no sign saying dogs have to be on leash before.”
- “...fines for not having your dog licensed, I’ve had that even though I’m just passing through town so there’s no reason why I would have licensing for my dog for that town since I’m just travelling through.”
- “...shelters should definitely should be more ah open to having animals because a lot people end up having to sleep on the street in the winter because of their dogs, and people aren’t going to give up their dogs just because they can’t sleep in a shelter.”
- “I think there should be like a reason for them to ah, yeah, be evicted for having an animal, not just because they have a dog.”
- “Maybe having a separate area, like a certain wing of the building, so people with fear and allergies don’t have to be in the same area as the people with the dogs.”
- “...at least a safe place where we could tie up your dog without letting it being at risk of being stolen outside or being fed food by strangers, which is a big problem!”
- “I would be more prone to be using their services if they were more pet-friendly. I do not go to shelters because I have a dog, so I’d be more prone to maybe be open to using them if they were pet-friendly, same as any other kind of services, I don’t go to them if they are not pet-friendly because I don’t like tying my dog up outside.”
- “...there’s Pops in Montreal where you can bring your dog in.”
- “He’s my familiar, he’s my friend and he’s like the champion to my partner...”
- “...we can connect on a deeper level.”
- “...it was kind of like a kid...”
- (having a companion animal) “...it did make a dramatic impact, because you really have to start caring about someone else life...”
- “...so like it gave me a lot of responsibility...”

- "...if you get ticketed or go to jail, depends what province or area it is, they might put your dog in the pound, and if you can't get out in time...."
- "...it would definitely help you getting around places, or getting a job, and getting healthy as well, and getting resources, if they did allow animals..."
- "It would help out tremendously."
- "...a lot of people are not aware, or conscious of other peoples' lives, they don't put themselves (in others shoes), and they don't look, so I think raising awareness..."
- "...it's very hard getting any place, again city by-laws and all this and that; if you leave a dog chained up or you leave a dog outside or something, people always have opinions, and so like I think that would help others seeking resources or aid or something, to be able to bring your dog in and because yeah, like because it can prevent you from seeking, and bettering yourself..."
- "My old love, she got a service card and that helped out tremendously."
- "...yeah, so like it sort of stops me from going, actually seeking aid..."
- "Yeah, straight up, like that's my kid..."
- "...so I stared out travelling with dogs and I thought they were just like, I don't know this annoyance..."
- "...one thing I did like them for was ah like just sleeping outside and stuff like that like you had a warning system..."
- "...like I kinda went on and I travelled with a rat for a little while..."
- "She could like you know read, if I was stressed out she would know about it. If I was mad she would know about it..."
- "...travelling with a dog is that it's a good excuse to hang around dog parks for four or five hours a day."
- "...they like gave me someone to talk to a lot..."

- "...I enjoyed life more..."
- "Challenge in that they slowed me down a lot. For like riding trains and stuff, they're a huge liability, they're stupid, they're loud, they take up space, they need food and water, lots of water, lots and lots of water..."
- "they are taking my resources, they're bulky, they're like endangering my safety and my speed, like I'll get arrested because they'll stick out they're head and bark at a worker, or something like that; or that or someone will walk by and they'll snap at them and then all of sudden they're calling the cops and then like I have to leave."
- "Yeah, looking back in hindsight most of the dogs I hung out with were at the oldest four because most of them would die or be taken away before they could get that old because of training and just life-style and stuff..."
- "it was definitely worse without them" (companion animals)
- "I was like I'm making all this money, and it was cool, but I was just like drinking a lot, but I was lonely as fuck and like I was not happy. There were parts of my life that were easier, but it was not worth it."
- "Like I had a bunch of money, I was just drinking and I ended up just like going back into like doing drugs a lot..."
- "...now I have dogs in my life again... And now I'm much, much happier"
- "I don't like keeping the dogs tied up outside anywhere for very long either..."
- Some people I think were honestly glad to be away from the responsibility of having the dog, like it's kind of a blessing in disguise even though they don't want to admit it.
- "...I'd do everything with her, except if I had to work or whatever..."
- "...I guess welfare places, yeah, I wish they allow dogs, especially because like you can't leave you dog tied up outside a place like that because that's where the poor, desperate, people go and then yes, they will definitely steal especially a well-trained dog that looks

healthy and stuff, like they'll send her to a puppy mill or something like that, which is terrifying."

- "...so I mean I have to do the whole fake service animal thing constantly..."
- "But I wish I didn't have to do that..."
- "And it sucks that you have to lie about this kind of stuff just to like exist in these places with your dog..."
- "So I just typically wouldn't go to a place that have that stuff. It sucks! I think they should."
- "I know all the reason why people don't want it, but it doesn't change the fact that your dog has to come with you, it's like an infant child or something like that, like you have to, you have to take it with you."
- "...tell them to keep their comments (to themselves), I've gotten a lot of shit for whatever thing pops into peoples (minds), like uh think before they tell people how to take care of their animals."

Table 2 – Selected Significant Statements

Table 2- Selected Significant Statements

- “...we’re both very emotionally dependent on each other.”
- “...I sleep with him every night, like I can’t sleep without him.”
- “I trust him before I trust any human, for sure.”
- “He’s saved me from getting mugged on the street, he’s saved me from coyotes attacking, he’s kept me warm when I was outside in the winter...”
- “...generally he’s by my side the entire day and like I often feel a lot of anxiety about leaving him outside of stores...”
- “...when I was on the street I was like an alcoholic, a severe alcoholic, so like I drank every day, but never to a point where like I wouldn’t be able to take care of him properly, like he was kind of my anchor in that sense.”
- “...he is too precious for me to have him taken away from me.”
- “...he’s my best friend...”
- “...he’s like always been my emotional support, so if I need a shoulder to cry on, (laughter) he’s there.”
- “..., I think that I would definitely have taken a lot more risks...”
- “...regular people will look at that and they will say, “oh these people can’t take care of a dog, like they’re on the street they shouldn’t even have an animal”, things like that...”
- “...I think there is probably a lot of bias opinions like that.”
- “...a lot of people on the street will be put in jail over tickets they can’t pay, just because they can’t get places with their animal.”

- “...if people who were on the streets had access to a certain patch or vest for their dog to show that they are homeless and they need to get their dog on public transportation.”
- “...people have kids, I love them just as much as somebody would love their children.”
- “.... I was addicted to heroin for six years and pretty much the only thing that stuck me being off it was like my dogs...”
- “People like rely on (their animals) like, even if like their animals aren’t service animals, there are some people like me that have very bad anxiety, or other issues that like can’t get a service card for them, but like we need the comfort of having them...”
- “...when I was younger and stuff in the Commons like the cops would only target the traveller kids, ‘cause like we’d be there and have our dogs off-leash and get tickets for having our dogs off-leash, but now, like after a couple of years ago, when I came back to Halifax like everybody has their dogs off-leash but they definitely aren’t giving them tickets, but like being a traveller or like homeless you are definitely targeted a lot more and your pets are targeted a lot more for that reason.”
- Shelters absolutely don’t allow pets...which is, pretty much like just cuts off any of that kind of help when you are travelling.”
- “...make a separate room for dog owners that they could sleep with them and stuff...”
- “She brings a lot of joy into my life.”
- “...she’s always on my side, she’s always got my back. And um like whenever you kind of feel like you’re alone, or if I feel like I’m alone she’s always there, so like I’m not technically alone.”
- “I feel like she’s helped me like develop into the person I am, or I am growing into a lot. Just by giving me responsibility, and just support right?”
- “Yeah, she definitely knows when I’m feeling down...or scared.”

- (without my companion animal) “...it would be like a big empty void in my life, it would be so sad.”
- “...an initial screening process and then you just get a card and then you can just take them around.”
- “...a lot of shelters they will put the dogs somewhere different from where you are sleeping, which I understand why they are doing that, but it doesn’t work for all dogs and like it actually excludes a lot of people in the long run because the dog has separation anxiety and that’s not going to work.”
- “...you just tie up your dog next to your bed, which I feel that could work as well...”
- “...we’re best friends.”
- “She’s definitely helped me get through some pretty tough times...”
- “I’d feel lost without her.”
- “...I take her with me and we go meet up with friends who also have dogs and we usually go to the park and go out and have a couple of hours of play time...”
- “I’m definitely less depressed.”
- “I think public transit should definitely allow dogs on the bus, like it works quite well in Toronto you’re allowed to let dogs on transit there, just not during rush hour, and they never have problems, I don’t see why other cities have a problem with accepting dogs on the bus.”
- “I feel like housing is a major issue, for being able to look for apartments having animals is a big issue ... but it definitely makes it a lot harder for youth on the streets to get apartments having a dog.”
- “...having more off-leash parks would also be really good...”

- “...fines for not having your dog licensed; I’ve had that even though I’m just passing through town so there’s no reason why I would have licensing for my dog for that town since I’m just travelling through.”
- “Maybe having a separate area, like a certain wing of the building, so people with fear and allergies don’t have to be in the same area as the people with the dogs.”
- “...at least a safe place where we could tie up your dog without letting it being at risk of being stolen outside or being fed food by strangers, which is a big problem!”
- “I would be more prone to be using their services if they were more pet-friendly. I do not go to shelters because I have a dog, so I’d be more prone to maybe be open to using them if they were pet-friendly, same as any other kind of services, I don’t go to them if they are not pet-friendly because I don’t like tying my dog up outside.”
- “He’s my familiar, he’s my friend and he’s like the champion to my partner...”
- “...we can connect on a deeper level.”
- “...if you get ticketed or go to jail, depends what province or area it is, they might put your dog in the pound, and if you can’t get out in time....”
- “...it would definitely help you getting around places, or getting a job, and getting healthy as well, and getting resources, if they did allow animals...”
- “...a lot of people are not aware, or conscious of other peoples’ lives, they don’t put themselves (in others shoes), and they don’t look, so I think raising awareness...”
- “My old love, she got a service card and that helped out tremendously.”
- “...one thing I did like them for was ah like just sleeping outside and stuff like that like you had a warning system...”
- “...they like gave me someone to talk to a lot...”
- “...I enjoyed life more...”

- “Challenge in that they slowed me down a lot. For like riding trains and stuff, they’re a huge liability, they’re stupid, they’re loud, they take up space, they need food and water, lots of water, lots and lots of water...”
 - “...they’re taking my resources, they’re bulky, they’re like endangering my safety and my speed...”
 - “Yeah, looking back in hindsight most of the dogs I hung out with were at the oldest four because most of them would die or be taken away before they could get that old because of training and just life-style and stuff...”
 - “I was like I’m making all this money, and it was cool, but I was just like drinking a lot, but I was lonely as fuck and like I was not happy. There were parts of my life that were easier, but it was not worth it.”
 - “...now I have dogs in my life again... And now I’m much, much happier”
 - Some people I think were honestly glad to be away from the responsibility of having the dog, like it’s kind of a blessing in disguise even though they don’t want to admit it.
 - “...so I mean I have to do the whole fake service animal thing constantly...And it sucks that you have to lie about this kind of stuff just to like exist in these places with your dog...”
 - “...tell them to keep their comments (to themselves), I’ve gotten a lot of shit for whatever thing pops into peoples (minds), like uh think before they tell people how to take care of their animals.”
-

Stories of Animal Friendship



Are you between the ages of 16 and 24 years?

Do you have or have you had a strong relationship with a companion animal (pet)?

Have you used services, such as shelters or drop-in centres?

My name is Melissa Caines. I am a student from Mount Saint Vincent University who has always loved animals and worked with youth and animals for many years. Now, as part of my research I want to listen to street involved youth tell their stories of animal friendships. If you answered yes to the questions above

and can spare an hour please contact me to arrange an interview.

Purpose of the study:

- ✓ Listen to the stories of friendship you've had with companion animal(s).
- ✓ Better understand the importance of companion animal(s) in the lives of street involved youth.
- ✓ Make recommendations to services

Benefits and Risks:

- ✓ Ways you may benefit from taking part in this study:
- ✓ Opportunity to tell your stories of friendship with companion animals
- ✓ Helping to improve services for street involved youth and their animals

In Appreciation: **prepaid \$25 Visa/MasterCard**

- ✓ Telling your story may bring up difficult feelings. A list of helpful services will be given out at the end of our conversation.

Right to leave the study:

- ✓ Answer only the questions you want

Results:

- ✓ Can be emailed to you
- ✓ Obtained through ARK Outreach upon completion
- ✓ Will be presented in public forum upon completion

APPENDIX II: VERBAL CONSENT FORM



March 2016

Thank you for your interest in my project on youth experiencing homelessness and their companion animals. The purpose of this study is to explore your relationship with a pet you have now or have had in the past. As the sole researcher I will be asking you a series of questions about your relationship with this pet or pets. The conversation, which will be audio taped with your permission, will take about thirty to sixty (30-60) minutes.

You are under no obligation to agree to this interview and participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate you will be given a twenty-five dollar (\$25) Visa/MasterCard gift card as a small token of appreciation. You may answer ONLY the questions you choose or completely withdraw from the study at any time without consequence and are welcome to keep the gift card. If you choose to withdraw from the study your information would be destroyed immediately and not used in any way. Confidentiality is a priority and your identities will be protected at all times nor will you be recognizable in any results. However, I have a duty to report if I know someone is being or is at risk of being hurt and it is my responsibility to advise you of this limitation.

The benefits associated with participating in this study include an opportunity to tell about your experiences with companion animals and the possibility of improving services for youth experiencing homelessness and their pets. There is the potential risk that telling your story may bring up difficult emotions; however, the questions in this interview are focused on the relationship between you and any pets you may have or have had, and not of a sensitive nature. Also, a pamphlet listing helpful services will be provided at the end of the interview.

Results from this study will be compiled into a research project and presented to the academic community; as well as to professionals in the social services and animal care fields. I will be presenting the results at the 2016 Bark in the Park in early July at the Victoria Park on South Park Street, and all are welcome. As well, if you leave your contact information I will provide you with access to the report once it is complete.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact me by email.

If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the Mount Saint Vincent University Research Ethics Coordinator: **Brenda Gagne** or my Thesis supervisor, **Dr. Ardra Cole**.

Do you have any questions at this time? Please feel free to ask me any questions at any time during or after the interview. If you are okay to proceed, would you please state whether or not you give verbal consent to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant:

Date of verbal consent:

Time:

APPENDIX III:



INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – STREET INVOLVED YOUTH & COMPANION ANIMALS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

(March, 2016)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview; I really appreciate your opinions and time. Please answer the following questions as best you can and as we have discussed, only answer the questions you want or end the interview at any time without consequence.

1. Please tell me a little about your pet or pets.
2. Please describe the relationship(s) you have or had with this pet or pets.
3. Please tell me what your companion animal(s) means or meant to you.
4. Please describe a typical day you and your pet would have together.
5. What, if any, difference have these animals made in your life?
6. How has your pet affected your life?
7. What is your life like or would do you think it be like without your companion animals(s)?
8. Have you ever had to give up a companion animal? If you have, how did that impact you?
9. Has anyone you know ever had to give up their companion animal while not living at home? If yes, how did that impact them?
10. How do you feel about services, such as shelters, public transportation, or employment assistance organizations, including pet-friendly services? And why?

11. How do you think services could best include companion animals?
12. How would 'pet-friendly' shelters or service options affect you?
13. Do you know of any pet-friendly shelters or services in the Halifax area? If yes, which ones?
14. Do you have anything you would like to add? Any suggestions? Or any questions?

Thank you again. If you would like a copy of the results from this study, please leave your contact information with me and I will get them to you when the study is complete.

APPENDIX IV: RESOURCE BROCHURE

Helpful Phone Numbers

Avalon Sexual Assault Response Line

902-425-0122

*24 Hours

Homeless Prevention Program

902-444-3400/3401

HRM Bully Line

902-490-7283 (SAVE)

*24 Hours

Kids Help Line

1-800-668-6868

*24 Hours

Mobile Crisis Intervention Services

902-429-8167

Melissa Caines
melissa.caines@msvu.ca
902-240-6637

Animal Friendships

Resource List

Food Banks & Soup Kitchens

ARK

2151 Gottingen Street, Halifax;
902-492-2577
*Sunday Suppers

Feed Nova Scotia

211 or www.ns.211.ca
*find nearest food bank or meal program

Hope Cottage

2435 Brunswick Street, Halifax;
902-429-7968

Parker Street Food and Furniture Bank

2415 Maynard Street, Halifax; 902-425-2125



Drop-In Centers

ARK

2151 Gottingen Street, Halifax;
902-492-2577

Laing House

1225 Barrington Street, Halifax;
902-473-7743

Phoenix Centre for Youth

6035 Coburg Road, Halifax; 902-420-0676

Youth Awareness & Resource Centre

2170 Brunswick Street, Halifax; 902-423-4838

Local Residential Shelters

Adsum House

2421 Brunswick Street, Halifax;
902-429-4443

Alcare Place

1374 Robie Street, Halifax; 902-423-9565

Barry House

2706 Gottingen Street, Halifax;
902-422-8324

Metro Turning Point

2170 Barrington Street, Halifax;
902-420-3282

Metro Non-Profit Housing Support Centre

101-75 Primrose Street, Dartmouth;
902-466-8714

Phoenix Youth Shelter

1094 Tower Road, Halifax; 902-446-4663

Shelter Nova Scotia

101-5506 Cunard Street, Halifax;
902-406-3631

Out of the Cold

1479 Barrington Street, Halifax
902-580-1479

**Please be advised that resource pamphlets were offered to youth, but none were taken.*

