

Toward Shaping the Future of Targeted Interventions for Victimised Youth: Adapting Personality-targeted Interventions for Reducing the Risk of Psychopathological Outcomes in Youth Involved in Youth Protection Services

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Montreal

Homelessness more likely for those who grow up in Quebec youth protection, study finds



'I was not prepared for adulthood, to make a budget, to find an apartment,' says man who lived through system



[Benjamin Shingler](#) · CBC News · Posted: Nov 19, 2019 3:39 PM ET | Last Updated: November 21, 2019



Concerns about a lack of support for those who age out of youth protection have been raised at the ongoing inquiry into Quebec's youth protection services (DPI). (Ivanoh Demers/Radio-Canada)

20% of youth who age out of care experience one or more homelessness episodes 13 months after leaving care (Goyette et al., 2019).

Youth receiving care in youth protection services suffer from several problems.

- Child maltreatment, complex trauma, parental substance use, multiple placement changes, and lack of family support when transitioning into independent living situations *(Aarons et al., 2008; McCoy, McMillen, & Spitznagel, 2008; Walsh, MacMillan, & Jamieson, 2003)*.
- Lower educational outcomes, higher rates of homelessness, and criminal justice involvement *(Gypen, Vanderfaeillie, De Maeyer, Belenger, & Van Holen, 2017)*.
- 49% meet the criteria for a current mental disorder, mainly disruptive disorders (conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder), followed by anxiety, depression, ADHD, and PTSD *(results from a systematic review and meta-analysis; Bronsard et al., 2016)*.



- Substance use disorders are highly prevalent among adolescents receiving care in youth protection services *(Aarons, Brown, Hough, Garland, & Wood, 2001)*
- Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2003: 14% of all 10-15 year old individuals investigated for maltreatment and 16% of individuals with substantiated cases had substance abuse problem *(Trocmé et al., 2005; Singh, Thornton, & Tonmyr, 2011)*.



- Living in foster homes increases the likelihood of substance abuse by 5X compared to no history of removal *(Pilowsky & Wu, 2006)*.



- More problems with drugs than alcohol *(Singh et al., 2011)*.

- Higher diagnosis of substance use disorders compared to youth in the general population *(e.g., Aarons et al., 2001; Aarons et al., 2008; Braciszewski & Stout, 2012; Narendorf & McMillen, 2010; Vaughn, Ollie, McMillen, Scott, & Munson, 2007; Wall & Kohl, 2007)*.





International Journal of Child and Adolescent Resilience

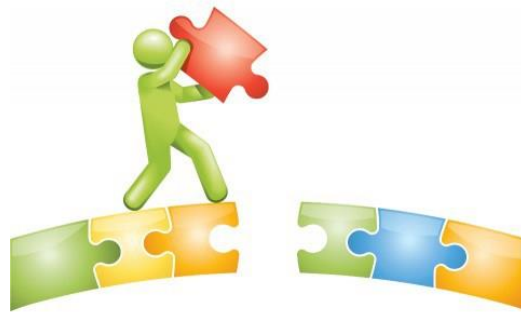
A Review to Identify Gaps in Research and Service Delivery for Substance Use Prevention among At-risk Adolescents Involved in Child Welfare System: The Promises of Targeted Interventions

Hanie Edalati¹, and Patricia J. Conrod¹

Less than 10% of adolescents and young adults in need receive such interventions (SAMHSA, 2009).

By targeting risk factors, such as personality, instead of onset of substance use or mental health problems, we have the advantage of:


- involving youth who might be higher functioning or not yet experiencing problems;
- promoting interventions as skill-building workshops and programs;
- and making them much more attractive and less stigmatizing and intimidating to vulnerable and victimised youth and their families.



Targeting Personality Risk Profiles for Building Resilience



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Well-Venture Project



This project aims to adapt an evidence-based personality-targeted substance use prevention/early intervention program (i.e., Preventure programme) for reducing the risk of substance use and mental health problems in adolescents receiving services from the Youth Protection System.

- To integrate a trauma-informed approach into personality-targeted interventions using a developmental perspective.
- To examine the feasibility and proof-of-concept of implementing these interventions on reducing the risk of substance use and related problems in adolescents in Youth Protection System in a pilot study.
- To better understand the psychological pathways which link the experience of complex trauma to risk and resilience for substance use and related problems in youth under protection services.



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Les Centres de la jeunesse
et de la famille Batshaw

Batshaw Youth
and Family Centres

What are the Personality-targeted Interventions (i.e., Prevention Programme)?

Targets four personality Risk Profiles for Substance Abuse and Misuse:

- Impulsivity
- Sensation Seeking
- Negative Thinking
- Anxiety Sensitivity



Dr. Patricia Conrod
Department of Psychiatry
University of Montréal

- Conrod PJ, Nikolaou K. Annual research review: on the developmental neuropsychology of substance use disorders. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry* (2016) 57:371–94. doi: 10.1111/jcpp.12516
- Conrod PJ. Personality-targeted interventions for substance use and misuse. *Curr Addict Rep.* (2016) 3:426–36. doi: 10.1007/s40429-016-0127-6
- Edalati H, Conrod PJ. A Review of Personality-Targeted Interventions for Prevention of Substance Misuse and Related Harm in Community Samples of Adolescents. *Front Psychiatry.* (2018), 9:770. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2018.00770

The Logic Model for the Preventure Programme

Input

Human Resources:

- 2-3 day workshops for training the facilitators (e.g., teachers, counsellors, social workers, clinicians)

Products:

- Substance Use Risk Profile Scale (SURPS)
- Manuals for each type of personality profile:
 - Impulsivity
 - Sensation-seeking
 - Anxiety sensitivity
 - Negative Thinking

Space:

- One room in school, clinic

Outputs

Participants:

- Adolescents who scored one standard deviation above the mean of their population on one of the SURPS measures
- A trained facilitator and a trained co-facilitator

Activities:

- Two 90-minute individual- or group-based workshops
- Interventions are conducted using manuals that include:
 - Psycho-educational component
 - Motivational enhancement therapy (MET)
 - Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
 - Real life 'scenarios' shared by local youth with similar personality profiles

Direct Product:

Participants learn how their personality profile leads to certain emotional and behavioural reactions and adverse consequences

Impact

Participants Learn How To:

- Set long-term goals
- Cope with their personality
- Weight the consequences of their actions
- Challenge hot thoughts related to their personality profile
- Break down their experience with risky situations into physical sensations, thoughts, and actions
- Make healthy decisions

Outcomes

Short and Intermediate Outcomes:

- Delaying the age of onset
- Decrease in the rates of illicit drug use and binge drinking
- Decrease in escalation of substance misuse
- Reduction in likelihood of transitioning to significant mental health problems including anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and conduct problems
- Effects last for up to three years

Long-term Outcomes:

- Reduce underage substance use harms
- Improve mental health of youth

Validated Prevention Program through 8 Randomised Trials



A Review of Personality-Targeted Interventions for Prevention of Substance Misuse and Related Harm in Community Samples of Adolescents

Hanie Edalati and Patricia J. Conrod*

TABLE 1 | Summary of five randomized trials of personality-targeted interventions (Preventure Programme) for substance misuse and related problems in community samples of high-risk adolescents.

Trial	Sample	Substance use outcomes	Mental health outcomes	Other related outcomes
1. Canadian prevention trial (4 months) (45)	HR secondary students (drinkers) IG: <i>n</i> = 166 CG: <i>n</i> = 131	Reduction in: Drinking rates (4 months) Drinking quantity (4 months) Binge drinking (4 months) Drinking problems (4 months)		
2. United Kingdom prevention trial (2 years) (40, 46–48)	HR secondary students IG: <i>n</i> = 190 CG: <i>n</i> = 157	Reduction in: Drinking rates (6 months) Binge drinking (6 months) Drinking problems (2 years) Uptake of illicit substance misuse (2 years) Drugs use rates (2 years) Drug use frequency (2 years) Cannabis use (2 years) Cocaine use (2 years)	Reduction in: Panic attack (6 months) Truancy (i.e., school avoidance) (6 months) Depression (6 months) Shoplifting (6 months)	
3. Dutch prevention trial (12 months) (44, 64)	HR secondary students (drinkers) IG: <i>n</i> = 343 CG: <i>n</i> = 356	Reduction in: Binge drinking (12 months) Growth of binge drinking (12 months)		Reduction in alcohol use outcomes in HR adolescents in lower education schools (e.g., vocational training)
4. United Kingdom adventure trial (2 years) (29, 39, 49, 51, 57, 59, 60, 64)	HR secondary students IG: <i>n</i> = 558 CG: <i>n</i> = 437	Reduction in: Drinking rates (2 years) Drinking quantity (2 years) Drinking frequency (2 years) Binge drinking (2 years) Growth of binge drinking (2 years) Drinking problems (2 years) Cannabis use (2 years)	Reduction in: Depressive symptoms (2 years) Anxiety symptoms (2 years) Conduct symptoms (2 years) Peer victimization (2 years) Bullying perpetration (2 years)	Reduction in alcohol use outcomes in HR adolescents with pre-existing depression and anxiety symptoms, and those in different SES (2 years) Additional reduction in those with pre-existing ADHD and conduct problems and those victimized by peers (6 months & 2 years) Reduction in drinking rates and growth of binge drinking in LR students (i.e., herd effect)
5. Australian CAP trial (3 years) (41)	HR secondary students IG: <i>n</i> = 202 CG: <i>n</i> = 291	Reduction in: Drinking rates (3 years) Binge drinking (3 years) Drinking problems (3 years)		

Note. HR: High-risk; IG: intervention group; CG: control group; SES: Socioeconomic Status; LR: Low-risk; ADHD: attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder; CAP: Climate and Prevention.

Associations of Personality with Alcohol Use Behaviour and Alcohol Problems in Adolescents Receiving Child Welfare Services

Sherry Heather Stewart · Melissa McGonnell ·
Christine Wekerle · Ed Adlaf ·
The MAP Longitudinal Study Research Team

Personality risk profiles also explained the motivation underlying substance use behaviours: hopelessness and impulsivity were related to drinking to cope with negative emotions, whereas, anxiety sensitivity was linked to drinking to conform.

Personality Traits and Drinking Motives Predict Alcohol Misuse Among Canadian Aboriginal Youth

Christopher J. Mushquash · Sherry H. Stewart ·
Aislin R. Mushquash · M. Nancy Comeau ·
Patrick J. McGrath

Personality traits of hopelessness, sensation seeking, and impulsivity were all associated with higher drinking levels and more alcohol problems. Anxiety sensitivity was positively correlated with difficulties at stopping drinking.

Personality and Individual Differences 81 (2015) 84–89



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Associations between personality and drinking motives in adolescents involved in the child welfare system[☆]

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Personality risk profiles also explained the motivation underlying substance use behaviours: hopelessness and impulsivity were related to drinking to cope with negative emotions, whereas, anxiety sensitivity was linked to drinking to conform.

Steps for Adapting the Preventure Programm for Adolescents Receiving Care in Youth Protection Services

Engaging the Youth Protection Services



First working group meeting

- Content of interventions
- Assessments & Procedure
- Planning the pilot trial
- Starting date



Well-Venture Working Group

February 11, 2019



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Steps for Adapting the Preventure Programm for Adolescents Receiving Care in Youth Protection Services

Engaging the Youth Protection Services

First working group meeting

Ethics approval

Pilot Trial

- Content of interventions
- Assessments & Procedure
- Planning the pilot trial
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- To examine the feasibility and proof-of-concept of these interventions on reducing substance use and mental health problems in youth in care.

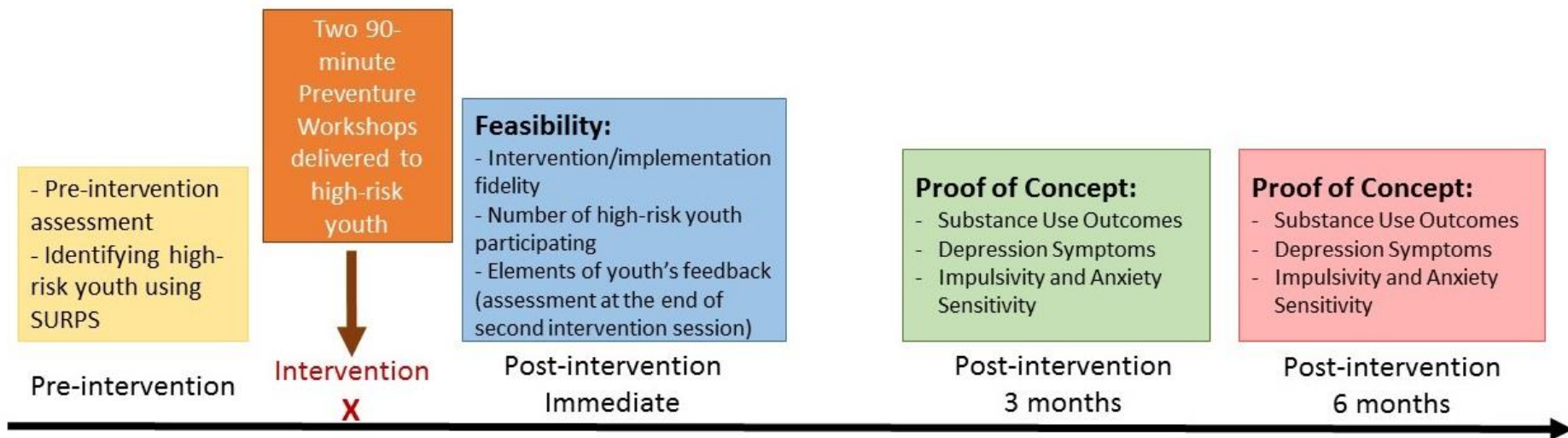
Well-Venture Training

- Six facilitators (educators and counsellors) from Batshaw Youth and Family Centres were trained for delivering the program (June 5-6 2019).
- Also 9 clinicians from the Dilico Anishinabek Family Care working with Indigenous youth in care were trained.



Well-Venture Pilot Trial

- To examine the feasibility and proof-of-concept of these interventions on reducing substance use and related problems in youth in care.



Recruitment & Baseline Assessment

- 62 adolescents were recruited from Batshaw Youth and Family Centres (October 2019).
- 52% female; Mean age= 16.07 (SD = 1.18)
- Recruitment units:
 - Prévost: n=26
 - Roxboro: n=7
 - Dorval: n=8
 - De Maisonneuve: n=9
 - St-James: n=4
 - Rudel & Hawking: n=4
 - Inuit: n=4

Results from Baseline Assessment of Personality Risk Profiles

Number and Percentage of youth who completed the survey (N = 62)

	Negative Thinking	Anxiety Sensitivity	Impulsivity	Sensation Seeking
SURPS Categories ¹				
High	36 (58%)	21 (34%)	20 (32%)	19 (30%)
Medium	25 (40%)	29 (47%)	35 (57%)	29 (47%)
Low	1 (2%)	12 (19%)	7 (11%)	14 (23%)

Note.

1. These norms were obtained by calculating the mean and standard deviation within a sample of 2975 secondary school students, aged 13-14 years old (male and female).

87% of youth received high scores on at least one trait.

13 youth showed high scores on two or more traits.

10 youth showed high scores on three or more traits.

2 youth showed high scores on four.

Results from Baseline Assessment of Primary Outcome Measures

- Depression symptoms (ranging from 0 to 24): **Mean = 12.88 (SD = 8.47)**
Using Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis, 1993)
- Anxiety Sensitivity (ranging from 5 to 20): **Mean = 11.61 (SD = 3.39)**
- Impulsivity (ranging from 5 to 20): **Mean = 12.94 (SD = 3.11)**
Using Substance Use Risk Profile Scale (SURPS; Woicik et al., 2009)
- Last 12-month Substance Use Outcomes
Using adapted version of 'Detection of Alcohol and Drug Problems in Adolescents Questionnaire' (DEP-ADO; Germain et al., 2005)
 - Total Number of Drug Used (including 12 groups of drugs): **Mean = 2.21 (SD = 2.40)**
 - Rate of Binge Drinking (4 drinks and more in the same occasion for girls, 5 drinks and more for boys): **Mean = 6.05 (SD = 20.25)**
 - Rate of Alcohol-related Harm (ranging from 0 to 9): **Mean = 1.66 (SD = 2.46)**
 - Rate of Drug-related Harm (ranging from 0 to 9): **Mean = 2.79 (SD = 2.98)**

Personality and Mental Health Problems in the Past 12 Months at Baseline

Over and above other personality risk profiles:

- Higher AS and NT were related to higher internalizing symptoms (depression and anxiety) ($t = 3.33, p < .01$; $t = 4.22, p < .001$, respectively).
- Higher IMP was associated with higher externalizing symptoms (conduct problems and ADHD) ($t = 5.00, p < .001$).
- Higher SS was related to higher binge drinking ($t = 2.37, p < .05$).
- Higher AS was associated with lower binge drinking ($t = -2.24, p < .05$).
- No significant relationship between personality risk profiles and alcohol- and drug-related harm.

Feasibility Outcome 1: Intervention/implementation fidelity

The clinical research team observed and evaluated the quality and fidelity of 7 out of 9 two ninety-minutes intervention sessions ¹ (at least one complete intervention for each facilitator) using PIFA ².

- ✓ All 6 Facilitators successfully completed running at least one complete intervention adhering to PIFA.

1. The two 90-minutes Intervention sessions included:

NT: 5 group-based

AS: 2 group-based and 1 individual

IMP: 1 group-based

SS: 1 group-based

2. Preventure Intervention/implementation Fidelity Scale (PIFA): evaluates adherence to 12 core treatment components of the personality-targeted intervention programme (e.g., goal setting, identifying and challenging automatic thoughts) (O’Leary-Barrett et al., 2017).

Feasibility Outcome 2: Number of high-risk youth participating in the intervention sessions.

Of all participants:

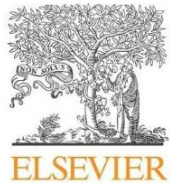
63% agreed to participate in the intervention sessions:

- 53% completed both intervention sessions.
- 10% completed the first intervention session but were not available for the second session (removed from the proof-of-concept analyses)

37% did not participate in the interventions:

- Only 5% were not interested to participate.
- The other 32% were not available to participate (discharged, placement, visiting families, moved to another unit/group home).

Feasibility Outcome 3: Youth-generated feedback regarding their intervention experiences assessed directly following the final intervention.



Process variables predicting changes in adolescent alcohol consumption and mental health symptoms following personality-targeted interventions



Maeve O'Leary-Barrett^{a,b,*}, Robert O. Pihl^b, Patricia J. Conrod^{a,c,d}

A B S T R A C T

Objective: This study aims to identify key process variables that are associated with changes in alcohol consumption and mental health symptoms over 12 months following personality-targeted interventions in youth.

Method: 154 high-risk youth (aged 12–13 years) in 7 Montreal high schools were identified using the Substance Use Risk Profile Scale and participated in personality-matched interventions. Preliminary process variables were identified using a combination of psychotherapy process variables and youth-generated (qualitative) feedback immediately post-intervention.

Results: Learning, skill development and a positive group experience were key to positive behavioural change. Youth-generated feedback independently accounted for 12–25% of the variance in the change in alcohol use and mental health symptoms over 12 months. Changes in cognitive distortions and self-esteem accounted for somewhat less of the variance in alcohol use (0–9%), but a moderate-to-large portion of the variance in changes in mental health symptoms (up to 44%).

Conclusions: The study findings highlight candidate process variables relevant to future implementations of this program that might inform change processes relevant to brief interventions with youth more generally. This study suggests that youth experiences can indicate proximal measures of program efficacy, and has implications for the dissemination of this brief intervention program.

Something you liked about the group.

Theme	Example responses	Well-Venture %	Co-Venture ¹ %
Ambiance	<p>The positive vibe.</p> <p>People were fun.</p> <p>Facilitators took my opinion into consideration.</p> <p>Activities.</p>	39.3%	22.7%
Sharing	<p>We could share stories without feeling embarrassed.</p> <p>The situation of everyone to relate with them.</p> <p>People understood you and didn't judge you.</p>	28.6%	50.0%
Material reasons	<p>The food.</p>	21.4%	16.2%
Learning	<p>The stuff we talked about was helpful and I could use it as tools.</p> <p>It was a learning experience.</p>	10.7%	15.6%

1. O'Leary-Barrett M, Pihl RO, Conrod PJ. Process variables predicting changes in adolescent alcohol consumption and mental health symptoms following personality-targeted interventions. *Addict Behav.* (2017) 75:47–58.

Something you didn't like about the group.

Theme	Example responses	Well-Venture %	Co-Venture ¹ %
Nothing	Nothing. Perfect.	29.2%	51.9%
Group atmosphere	People trying to be the clown of the group. People that were not participating.	29.2%	12.3%
Intervention content or structure	Too long. I couldn't relate that much. The work.	20.8%	16.2%
Intervention setting	Traffic. The lights in the room.	12.5	-
Sharing	I wasn't comfortable talking about my answers. Girls are judgemental.	8.3%	6.5%

1. O'Leary-Barrett M, Pihl RO, Conrod PJ. Process variables predicting changes in adolescent alcohol consumption and mental health symptoms following personality-targeted interventions. *Addict Behav.* (2017) 75:47–58.

What is the most important thing you have learned?

Theme	Example responses	Well-Venture %	Co-Venture ¹ %
Managing/ challenging thoughts	<p>To think before I act.</p> <p>How to deal with hot thoughts.</p> <p>To step back and think when you have bad thoughts.</p> <p>To think positive.</p>	56.0%	26.6%
Psychoeducation	<p>Physical sensations.</p> <p>Anxiety; stress; lack of confidence.</p>	20.0%	24.7%
Coping	<p>There's many more solutions to cope other than drugs and alcohol.</p> <p>That we all make mistakes and to have confidence in myself without fearing what others think.</p> <p>I learned that it is important to get to know your feelings.</p>	12.0%	31.2%

1. O'Leary-Barrett M, Pihl RO, Conrod PJ. Process variables predicting changes in adolescent alcohol consumption and mental health symptoms following personality-targeted interventions. *Addict Behav.* (2017) 75:47–58.

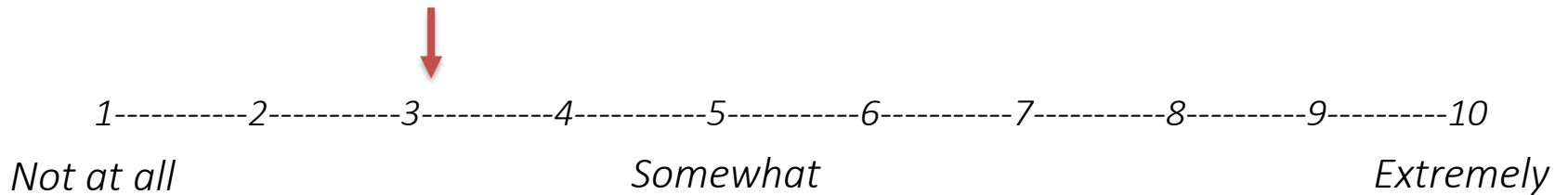
What is the change that you are considering?

Theme	Example responses	Well-Venture %	Co-Venture ¹ %
Thoughts	Think before doing something. Not thinking drugs when I'm feeling down. Thinking more and not letting my thoughts control me. My negative mindset.	43.5%	22.1%
Behaviours	To use those tools in my life to help me get out of the system. To be a nicer and less bitter person.	21.7%	31.8%
Feelings	Expressing the way I feel. Be more confident.	8.7%	31.8%

1. O'Leary-Barrett M, Pihl RO, Conrod PJ. Process variables predicting changes in adolescent alcohol consumption and mental health symptoms following personality-targeted interventions. *Addict Behav.* (2017) 75:47–58.

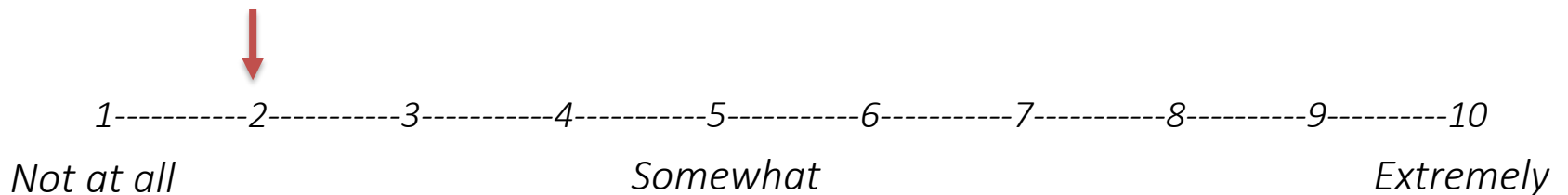
- Were you in any way embarrassed at being in the Well-Venture workshops?

➤ $M = 3.12, SD = 2.51$



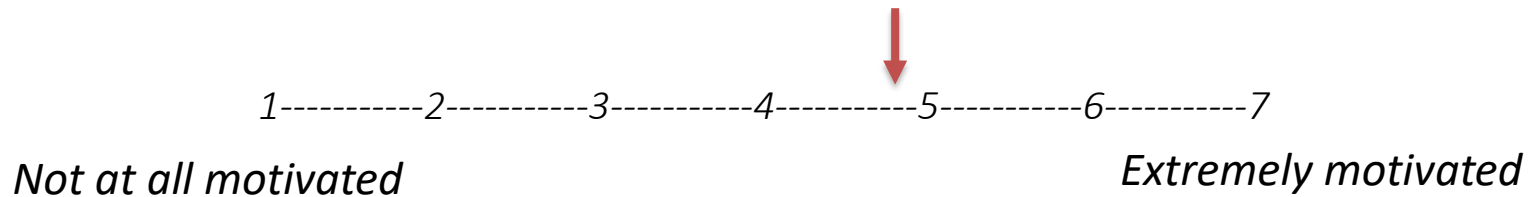
- Did you get picked on or teased by any other kids for being in the Well-Venture workshops?

➤ $M = 2.00, SD = 2.25$



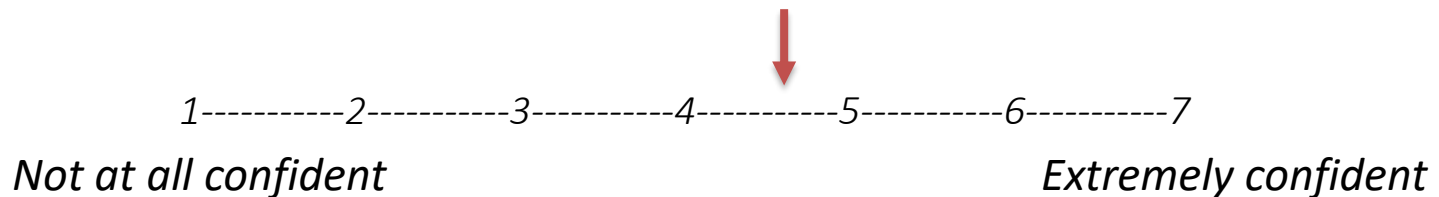
- How motivated are you to make a change following this workshop?

➤ $M = 4.88, SD = 1.80$



- How confident are you that you will be able to make this change?

➤ $M = 4.60, SD = 1.94$



3-month post-intervention assessments will be completed in March 2020.

<https://www.conrodventurelab.com/projets/well-venture>

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Well-Venture

Adapting Personality-Targeted Interventions for Reducing the Risk of Substance Use and Mental Health Problems in Youth in Child Welfare System. This study is supported by a CIHR Fellowship to Dr. Hanie Edalati and the following Research Chair to Dr. Patricia Conrod: Fondation Julien/Marcelle et Jean Coutu en Pédatrie Sociale en Communauté de l'Université de Montréal.



+ BACKGROUND

+ STUDY DESIGN

+ TEAM

+ NEWS & EVENTS

Steps for Adapting the Preventure Programme for Adolescents Receiving Care in Youth Protection Services

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First working group meeting

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Pilot Trial

- To examine the feasibility and proof-of-concept of these interventions on reducing substance use and mental health problems in youth in care.

Focus group with participating youth and facilitators

Data analysis

- Qualitative
- Quantitative

Second working group meeting

Disseminating and Planning Meeting

Early Targeted Interventions for Vulnerable and Marginalized Youth:
Planning the Future Directions of Implementing Personality-targeted
Interventions for Building Resilience against Substance Use and Mental
Health Problems

April 24, 2020

Centre de recherche du CHU Sainte-Justine | CHU Sainte-Justine Research Center
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Future Directions

- New Project with Youth Protection Services: Using the results of the Well-Venture Project to develop prevention programmes for reducing the risk of substance use and mental health problems among youth involved in the system:
 - Modifying/Adding youth's stories and integrating youth's perspectives to the manuals and interventions
 - Extending the research to directeur de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ)
 - Adding other interventions to target self-esteem?; rumination?; interpersonal difficulties?
- Project with Indigenous youth in care (cultural adaptation):
 - Nunavik Regional Board Of Health Service (NRBHSS); Québec
 - Dilico Anishinabek Family Care; Thunder Bay, ON

CONCLUSIONS

There is an urgent need for evidence-based early substance use and mental health interventions within the Youth Protection Services that are trauma-informed and sensitive to cultural values, developmental needs, sex/gender differences, and attitudes of the targeted youth.

The proper time to influence the character of a child is about a hundred years before he is born. – W.R. Inge



Merci!

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SUR L'ENFANCE ET LA FAMILLE



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