

ONE YEAR OUTCOMES OF YOUTH LEAVING RESIDENTIAL CARE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Lisa Dickens

Girls and Boys Town



Context & Challenges

- CL: Abrupt transitions at 18 years old, lack of preparation, support = poorer outcomes
- SA Youth: Complex socioeconomic challenges
- SA CL: This context WITH limited policy and resources & local literature & research
- Highly vulnerable & marginalised
- BUT our CLs faring surprisingly well

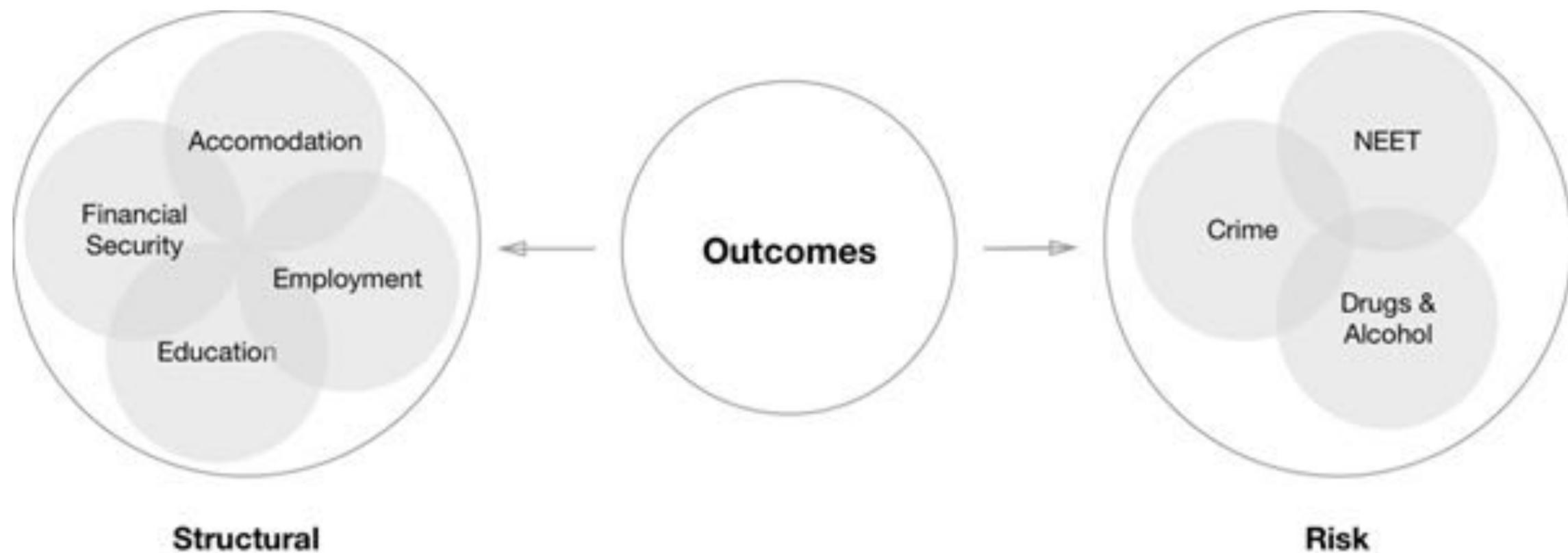


Overview of GBT research

- Began in 2012: How successful are we?
- Which resilience constructs predict better outcomes
- Phase 1: Young men 5 years out of GBT
- Phase 2: Longitudinal study; Interviews at disengagement and annual follow-ups.
- Phase 3: Resilience measured as they enter care. See if we can enhance important resilience factors.

Methodology

- Growth Beyond the Town
- Longitudinal mixed methods:
 - Measuring Resilience (YERS) - Disengagement
 - Telling their stories (Qualitative) - FU
 - Measuring Outcomes (Quantitative: employment, accommodation, crime etc) - FU
- 99 youth; 10 cohorts; 5th year
- These findings:
 - 69 - disengagement & 52 - FU = 75% retention rate
 - Participants: 94% male, 52% black, 46% in a relationship, 6% with children, 4% married



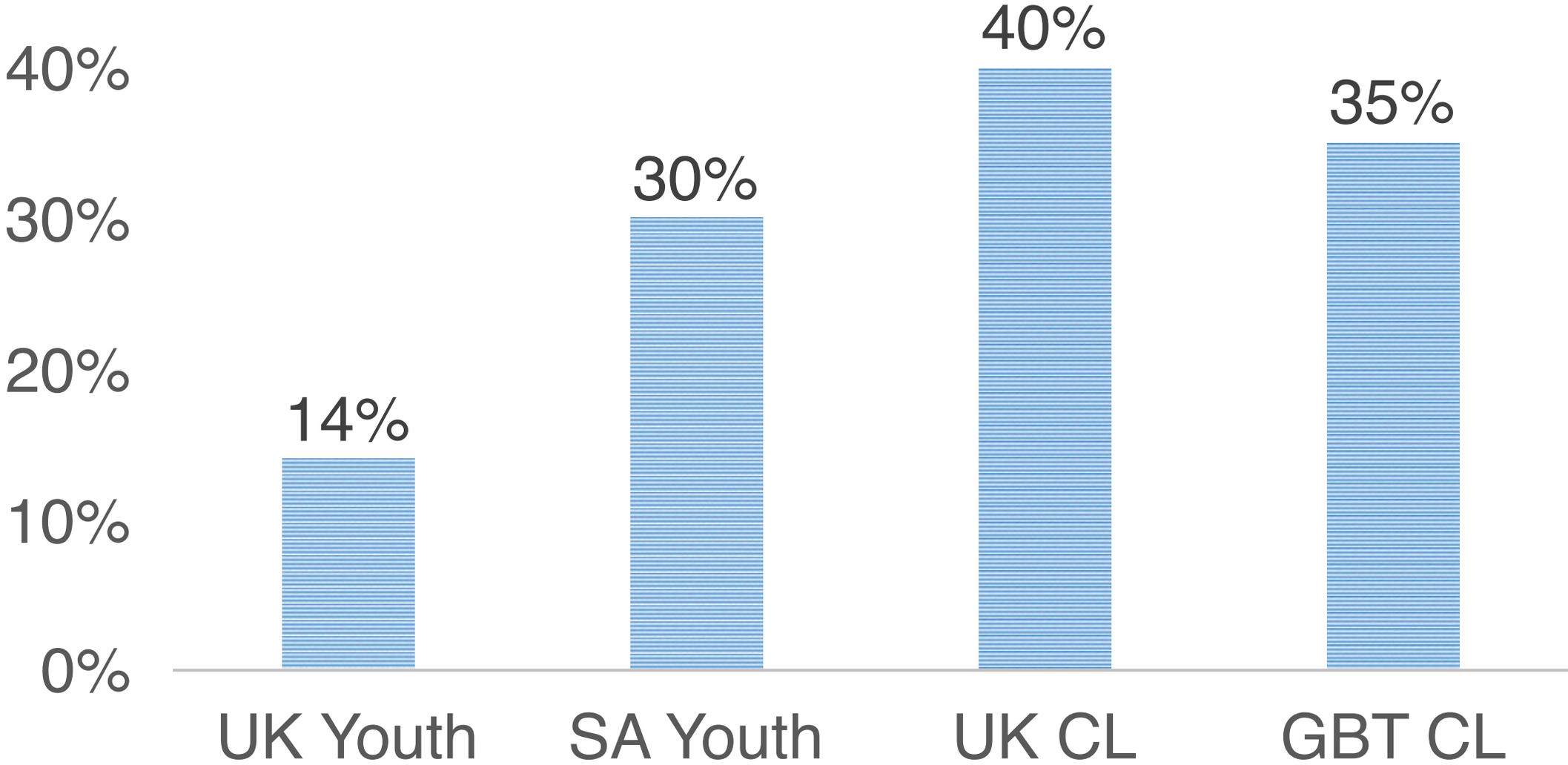
Accommodation

- GBT CL: 90% formal dwelling, 10% in shacks
 - SA: 78% formal dwelling; 14% in shacks

 - GBT CL: 83% with family, 4% independent living
 - UK CL: 47% independent living

 - GBT CL: 4% homelessness
 - UK CL: 33% homelessness
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Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)



Employment

- Employment is central to achieving self-sufficiency for CLs, yet their employment outcomes are generally poor.
- GBT CL: 54% unemployed
- SA Youth: 55% for 15-24 year olds
- US CL: Just under half foster care youth employed after 1 year
- Of those working, 46% changed jobs once, 42% kept job for a year

Education

Education predicts employment outcomes, salary levels, general well-being and better life outcomes for CLs BUT more than any other youth, CL have low educational attainment, higher rates of absenteeism, drop out early, discipline issues, poorer grades, don't study further.

- At disengagement 27% of GBT CLs had Grade 12
- 31% studying, of those 56% were in school = 44% studying further
- SA Youth: Half do not complete their secondary schooling

Financial Security

- In UK, CL get financial assistance & housing support until 21
- GBT CL: 21% a liveable income (proportion of care-leavers who earn above R1600 p/m through work & no short term loans
- Working: 96% work was their main income
- Not working:
 - 31% rely on family
 - 8% rely on grants
 - 17% no income/begging/crime
- 31% get less than R400 p/m
- 35% no bank account
- 60% less than R400 savings

Drugs and Alcohol

- UK CL: One-fifth misused drugs & alcohol after care
11% excessive alcohol use & 21% drug use
- GBT CL: 87% drugs & alcohol free
(past 2-4 weeks, no binge drinking, used cannabis
no more than once a week, and did not use hard drugs)
- 60% smoke cigarettes
- 17% use cannabis
- 6% used hard drugs in the year

Crime

- UK CL: 6% contact with criminal justice system, compared to 3% of non-CLs
- GBT CL: 77% crime free
(avoided any serious crime / trouble with the law)
- 23% serious crime – of those 33% small crime & 66% in trouble with the law (1 serving a prison sentence, 2 guilty of a crime, 3 charges laid against them, 2 had spent time in jail)
- No relationships NEET & crime

Conclusion

- CL doing better than expected in impoverished situations: accommodation, low homelessness, refraining from drugs & alcohol, crime
- Poorer outcomes: NEET, employment & education, liveable income
- Third are NEET, same as SA youth but better than other CLs
- Focused and integrated approach to improving educational attainment in care and promoting further education
- Delayed disengagements until completed secondary schooling but even that has no guarantees



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