

A Needs Assessment of Perinatal Programs for Adolescent Mothers in the City of Nanaimo, British Columbia

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INTRODUCTION

Nanaimo, British Columbia has a high adolescent pregnancy rate in comparison with the rest of the province:

- Nanaimo: 21.7 adolescent pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-17
- BC: 16.2 adolescent pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-17

Many risks are associated with adolescent motherhood:

- Low confidence in parenting ability
- Little knowledge of child development
- Lack of social support
- Poverty and unsafe neighbourhoods



However, certain protective factors are associated with positive outcomes:

- Being on grade level in school
- Positive relationships, especially a close relationship with another
- Having parenting skills and basic developmental knowledge
- Access to community resources and social support

Protective factors play a large role in the concept of resilience, which is the capacity of those who are exposed to risk factors to overcome them and avoid negative outcomes. Protective factors can help increase resilience in at-risk populations such as adolescent mothers and their children.

Multiple social program delivery styles have been found to help adolescent mothers build resilience by increasing the protective factors in their lives:

- Home visitation programs (most successful)
- Comprehensive clinic programs
- Classroom-style programs

RESEARCH GOALS

Primary Research Goal: To carry out a needs assessment for adolescent mothers in Nanaimo.

Research Questions:

- What services are available in Nanaimo?
- Are they sufficient enough to meet the needs of this population?
- Do they include any elements that foster resilience (protective factors)?
- Do they include any elements of the delivery styles that have been established as effective?

METHOD

Participants:

Seven “key informants” - community members who work with and refer adolescent mothers to services within Nanaimo.

Measure:

A semi-structured interview containing seven fact and opinion questions created by the primary researcher with the input of the Resilience Research Lab at VIU.

Procedure:

All interviews took place at the key informants’ offices. Each participant was asked to read and sign a consent form prior to the start of the interview. All interviews were audio recorded and took approximately 30 minutes.

Analysis:

Each recorded interview was transcribed and examined. Questions 1-3, the fact questions, were analyzed by the primary researcher only and questions 4-6, the opinion questions, were analyzed by the primary researcher and three research assistants. Categories were created to group the responses to the opinion questions.

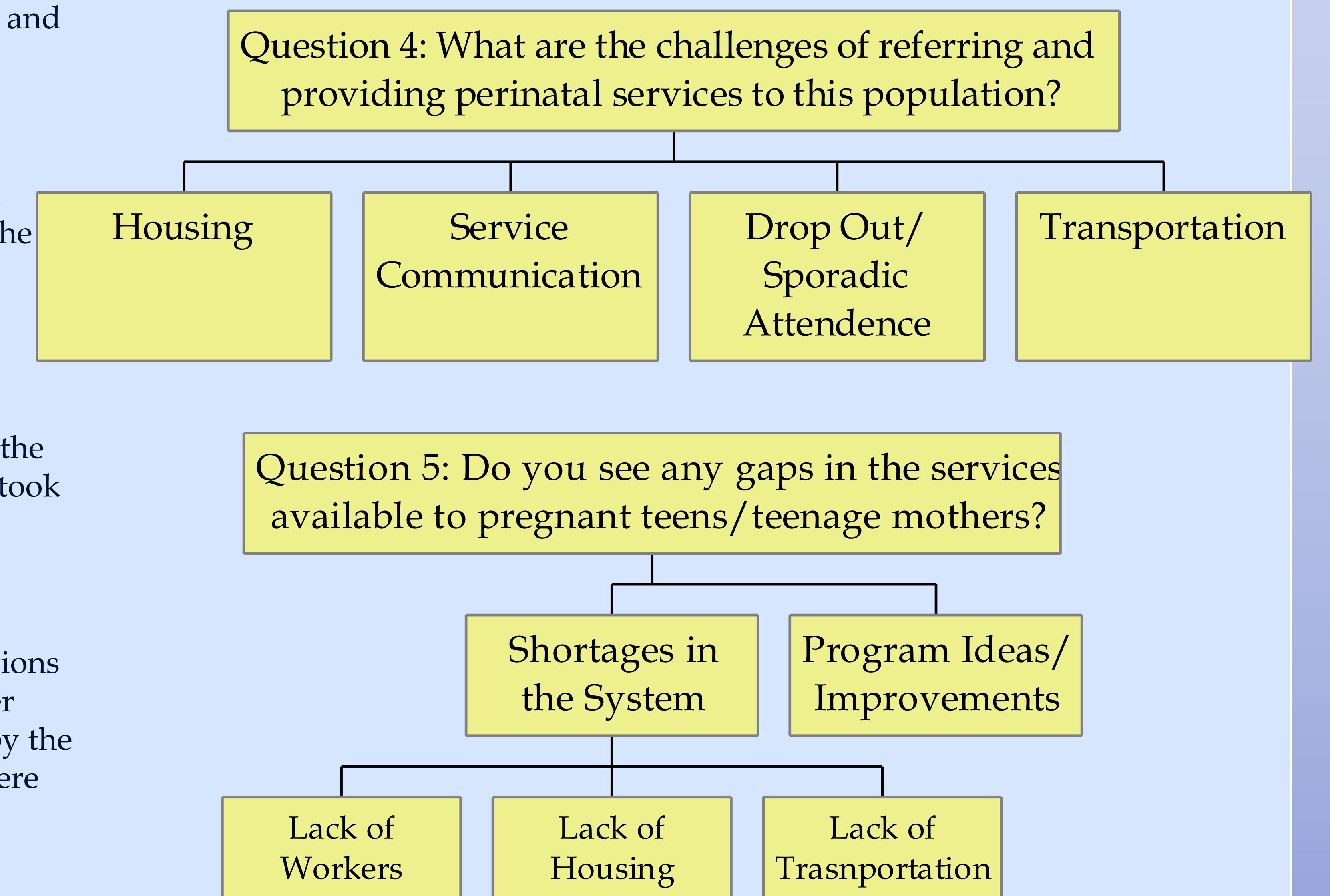
RESULTS

Results for each interview question were discussed separately.

A summary of results for questions 1-3:

Question	Most common responses (3-7 participants)	Less common responses (2 participants)	Least common responses (1 participant)
Question 1: What services do you offer to pregnant teens/teenage mothers?	•Material support (baby clothes, food, etc.) •Outreach services	•Parenting program •Medical care •General support	•Daycare •Prevention •Housing •Options counseling
Question 2: What services would you refer a pregnant teen/teen mom to?	•Public health (Princess Royal) •Tillicum Haus •Education programs •Medical care	•MCFD •Youth Housing •Crisis Pregnancy Centre •Haven House	•NYSA •Social Services •Nanaimo Family Life •CDC
Question 3: How do you work to promote protective factors?	•Social support •Promoting education •Counseling	•Parenting education •Programs that promote attachment	•Material goods •Inexpensive housing

A summary of results for questions 4-5:



Question 6: What is working well in Nanaimo with regards to perinatal programming?

- The majority of participants said that there are a lot of programs available in Nanaimo and that this is a positive thing. Most also named specific services they saw as working well.

CONCLUSIONS

- Multiple programs are available for this population in Nanaimo
- Almost all programs promote protective factors in some way
- No programs subscribe to the home visitation model
- There are gaps in the services available in Nanaimo and improvement in these areas would likely help further decrease risks associated with adolescent motherhood
- Elements of resilience based programs do exist in Nanaimo’s services and these could be expanded to increase the likelihood of positive life outcomes for this group
- Need was established for an up-to-date community list of services from which service providers could refer