

SUPPORTING YOUTH LIVING IN FAMILY HOMELESS SHELTERS

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Supporting Youth Living in Family Homeless Shelters

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Supporting youth living in family homeless shelters is important as these families face multiple barriers in their lives. Youth have many strengths that they build upon which can be useful as they bounce from home to home. Youth living in homeless shelters with their family may lack resources to guide them as they navigate life.

This paper specifically focuses on the Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter in the city of Des Moines, IA. This is a thirty-day shelter that offers case management for parents but has a lack of programming for youth. This writer reviewed two different family programs to recommend to the Family Shelter. Staff of the Catholic Charities Emergency Family Shelter and current guests were interviewed by the writer to investigate if the two family programs would work for this particular shelter. An adapted program for youth and their families is recommended for the shelter.

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## INTRODUCTION

Families can be affected by many stressors in their life varying from financial stressors, personal relationships, and parenting their children. Parents are expected to raise their families in a house filled with all the basic necessities and fulfilling their children's developmental needs. However, what happens when a family experiences an unexpected crisis? What happens to a family if a natural disaster destroys their house, or an even smaller event such as a car accident which causes a parent to miss work? If a family is already poor and affected by low wages, the family may have to decide what necessities they can survive on. Eventually a family may no longer be able to afford housing, and the journey of being a homeless family begins.

In 2018 it was reported 552,830 people experienced homelessness on a single night (Henry, et al., 2018). People in families with children comprised 33.9% of those experiencing homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2009). This is only a small percentage of the 1.42 million people who experience sheltered homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2009). Specifically in the state of Iowa there were an estimated 2,749 homeless people in 2018, of which 325 were family households (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2018).

Many of these families may have become homeless due to a variety of issues that could include eviction, nonpayment of rent or even death of a family member (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2015). A family may move on average four times in the year, living with friends and family, or in motels or temporary housing. This state of homelessness can last on average up to eight months (Bassuk, Rubin, & Lauriat, 1986).

There are four different definitions from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (2019) that qualify a person as homeless. The first is "literally homeless":

people are living in unsuitable living conditions, transition housing, or an emergency shelter. The second is “imminent risk of homelessness”, which includes people who may not have housing within the next 14 days, living with other people or living at a motel/hotel. The third category is “homeless under other federal status”, which includes families with children, and unaccompanied youth under the age 25 who have experienced unstable housing and will continue to experience unstable housing for an extended period. The fourth definition includes those who are fleeing or attempting to leave domestic violence in their current household and will be homeless once they leave the domestic violence situation. Once families have exhausted all housing options, they may decide to live at a homeless shelter. An estimated 478,718 people in 150,630 family households used an emergency shelter or a transitional housing program in 2017 (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2017). By the time a family ends up at a homeless shelter, the children have likely experienced a disruptive household for years.

### **Homeless Family Disruptions**

A homeless family may be experiencing negative disruptions in their lives such as separation between parents, divorce, or death of a parent. The parents or parent in the family may be unemployed, incarcerated, disabled, have substance abuse issues or mental health issues (Vandentorren et al., 2015). There may be problems between parents or between the head of household and their significant other (Haber & Toro, 2004). The parents of the family may have been so extremely focused on their unstable housing that they ignored their child’s emotional, physical, educational, and other needs (Swick, 2008). Parents may have felt a loss of control and lost confidence in their own parenting skills (Swick, 2008). Children’s lives are disrupted and the effects spill over into multiple parts of their lives such as school or their mental health (Haber & Toro, 2004). Children’s school attendance may be irregular, putting them at risk of failing their

school work. These negative effects are often compounded because being homeless may not just happen once in their life. Clearly, there is a need for support for these homeless youth as they transition from homeless living.

### **Homeless Parents**

Once a homeless family's basic needs are met within the shelter, then they can be empowered to use their strengths to build upon their skills (Smith, Holtop, & Reynolds, 2015). Homeless parents are still parents who experience the ups and downs of parenting. They are dedicated to parenting and strive to be good parents (Swick, 2008). Parents have the motivation to improve their lives and provide the best outcome for their children. Homeless parents have resiliency which is used to push through their challenges in order to survive. They use interpersonal skills and "street smarts" to ensure that their family has their basic needs met.

In a study of homeless mothers completing a parenting class, Cosgrove (2005) found that parents may lack the experience of being around positive parenting, which includes giving children praise and encouragement rather than spanking or yelling. The mothers reported feeling that there was a notion that they were incompetent as parents just because they were homeless. Parents need a class that is not just the basics of parenting, rather a program where they can interact with their children and build upon their strengths together. Having family time is important to a family's daily life (Mayberry, Shinn, Benton, & Wise, 2014), so creating a program that imitates family time would be beneficial for the family.

### **Homeless Youth**

Teens may find living in a homeless shelter difficult. They cannot have their friends over, there is a lack of privacy, and they understand the social stigma that comes along with being homeless (Clervil, 2010). They are at the age where they understand what is happening and may

be tired of bouncing from place to place. Most activities conducted in a family homeless shelter are geared towards younger children (Clervil, 2010). The youth living in different family shelters interviewed by Clervil (2010) expressed that they would like to see programs for teens to help them adjust to the new environment and culture. Incorporating the Positive Youth Development Framework would be beneficial for youth living in a homeless shelter. The Positive Youth Development Framework by Youth Power (n.d.) is an overall vision for youth to be healthy and productive. This includes having the following domains: assets, agency, contribution, and enabling environments. Within these domains there are features that promote positive youth development through skill building, healthy relationships/bonding, positive expectations, safe spaces, and access to age appropriate services. Part of this Positive Youth Development Framework are the Five Cs. The Five Cs are characteristics of thriving youth, and when adolescents exhibit the Five Cs it shows that they are on the path to being healthy and productive youth (Bowers et al., 2010). The Five C's are competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. Homeless youth already possess some strengths from the Five Cs such as competence, confidence, and connection. Through their experiences they have gained these strengths, which can help them on their journey to continue working on the positive development framework.

In a study of homeless youth living on the streets, Bender, Thompson, McManus, Lantry, and Flynn (2007) showed that homeless youth have strengths such as competence, confidence, and connection. Youth learn to navigate the streets to fulfill their basic needs and solve their own problems. They develop "street smarts" because they must deal with life on a day to day basis which can change constantly. They may have to protect themselves from harm by doing things such as avoiding dangerous places and networking with other peers. Homeless youth learn to



avoid undependable people and can recognize those they can depend on. They have an understanding that using interpersonal skills is useful in getting their needs met. For example, being able to approach strangers to ask for information and being able to negotiate are skills they use to get their needs met. These youth spoke of maintaining a positive attitude to deal with living on the streets and having coping skills to help them deal with their situation. Having friends as part of their community helped with feeling that they belonged and were being supported (Bender et al., 2007). Shelters that house families can help facilitate positive youth development by providing opportunities to youth to strengthen their skills through shelter programming (Mayberry et al., 2014).

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

There are different processes in different cities in how a family may be placed in a homeless shelter. For this paper, the focus will be on the city of Des Moines, Iowa. For the city of Des Moines, a family can no longer arrive at a homeless shelter and expect to be placed in beds for the night. The process to be placed in a homeless shelter in Des Moines is called coordinated intake, in which one organization oversees the placing of homeless individuals and families into the homeless shelters in the city. The person or family must fit the criteria that HUD uses to define homelessness; from there they are placed into the various shelters for single men, families, veterans etc.

One specific family shelter is the Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter, whose goal is to ensure those experiencing homelessness are getting their needs met such as health concerns and are placed immediately into a shelter that can help them into the next phase of stable housing. This shelter houses up to ten families, each family having their own room and sharing a communal kitchen, living room, and bathrooms. The family must adhere to the rules of the shelter such as curfew, kitchen restrictions, and cleaning expectations.

There are two different community organizations that come to do programming at the shelter. One program is conducted by local nurses who come once a week to offer a class about health with topics such as when to take your child to the emergency room or tips to reduce a fever. The second program is offered by local community members who come to do art crafts with the residents. The two programs are not geared towards youth, rather towards parents and young children. This shelter does not have any youth programs and could benefit from using the time after dinner to engage the guests in parent-youth programming. The parent-youth program could be led by staff who will guide the parent-youth interaction which will help the parents

build positive relations with their children and give youth the opportunity to acclimate to their new surroundings (Davey, 2004).

For this paper I assessed the needs of the parents and the youth who live in the Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter in the city of Des Moines, IA. Based on their needs I am recommending a program for the shelter to offer for their parents and youth. The first program reviewed is the Strengthening Families Program by Alvarado, Kumpfer, Kendall, Beesley, and Lee-Cavaness (2000), which has been adapted nationally and internationally for different settings for parent-youth intervention.

For this paper, the Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14 program adapted by Iowa State University Extension was reviewed. This adapted program is conducted in seven sessions that help parents or caregivers learn nurturing skills to support their children and how to effectively discipline and guide their youth. It also helps youth gain skills to deal with stress and peer pressure and gives them a healthy future orientation. The program splits the parents and youth into different groups, and then brings them back together into a family session.

The parenting sessions cover positive parent-child interactions, increased attention and praise for positive behavior, family communication, and effective discipline. For the youth, their training includes communication skills with others, resilience skills, problem solving, anger management, and coping skills. The family sessions bring the parents and youth back together to practice what they learned in their individual sessions, while giving the leaders an opportunity to encourage and coach the families. A study done by Kumpfer, Xie, and O'Driscoll (2012) showed positive effects from using the Strengthening Families Program. Families in the program showed

improvements in family resilience, family environment, and children's concentration and covert aggression.

The second program that may be recommended is by Davey (2004) who conducted a program called MFG, Multi-Family Group, weekend retreat for families living in a homeless shelter. This program had parents and children participating in weekend retreats that started Friday evening at 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with sessions covering topics such as: building trust, identifying family strengths, communication, stress management, and decision-making responsibilities. The reported outcome from this study was an increase in the parents' coping abilities and that families enjoyed learning new things in a fun way (Davey, 2004).

To ensure that the recommended program will be effective and needed, this writer conducted interviews with the Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter case manager, shelter coordinator, and program manager. Parents living at the shelter were also interviewed to assess what they thought was needed. A sample of interview questions may be found in Appendix A. Being homeless may not be a one-time ordeal for these youth and providing a program for them may help as they continue their journey to adulthood.

### **Interview Process**

I contacted the Poverty Reduction Manager to ask permission to interview staff and shelter guests as well. She gave me permission to interview herself, the Shelter Coordinator, the Case Manager, and two part-time staff. The Poverty Reduction Manager received a consent form from Human Resources for me to give to the guests before I was able to interview them (see Appendix B). The instructions were that I could not interview when I was on duty, any information I learned during the interview I could not share with fellow part-time staff, and to make copies

three copies of the consent form, one for myself, one for the guest, and the third to go into their file. As per the Shelter Coordinator's instructions, I was to not use the word *homeless* while speaking to the guests, and he asked me to refrain from interviewing one specific family due to the parent having high anxiety over being homeless and living in the shelter. Over the span of two days I asked each adult guest if they would participate in my interviews. I explained that I was working on my master's degree with an emphasis on youth development and had decided to write my masters paper on the Catholic Charities Emergency Shelter. I informed the parents that my overall goal was to interview guests and staff for this paper to gain an understanding about youths' experiences living at this shelter. I gave them details of the consent form and that I would be back when I was off duty. I came back to the shelter off duty on three different days in accordance with the guests' schedules. Before each interview began, we reviewed the consent form, and the guest signed it. I referred to a copy of the questions and often reworded questions depending on the family and on any language barrier.

### **Background of Staff**

The Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Charities runs the Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter. This is a facility that is staffed 24/7 and run by the Shelter Coordinator who is managed by the Poverty Reduction Manager. In addition to the part-time staff, there is also a case manager on duty during the day. The part-time shelter staff work in 5-7 hour shifts daily, helping to keep the shelter in order by cleaning and documenting any issues or questions the guests may have.

The part-time staff are managed by the Shelter Coordinator who runs the house by managing intakes, tracking household supplies, and addressing guests' questions and concerns. The Poverty Reduction Manger supervises the Shelter Coordinator and makes the overall

decisions about the shelter itself and the guests residing as well. Together the Shelter Coordinator, Case Manager, and Poverty Reduction Manager track each family that is living at the Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter. They look for the progress made by each family in terms of employment and housing. I conducted in-person interviews with the Shelter Coordinator and the part-time staff. I interviewed the Poverty Reduction Manager over the phone and was not able to interview the Case Manager due to scheduling conflicts.

### **Staff Interviews**

The first question asked for staff interviews was what strengths they see in homeless families and in their children. The most common answer was that they saw resiliency in these families and youth. These families have had to survive on nothing with multiple barriers and their bond is stronger than a traditional family. They have each other's back and will protect each other no matter what. Youth in homeless families also have multiple strengths, such as being able to deal with change very well. They are always in crisis and understand what they need to do to survive. Youth have hope and appreciate what they receive. Some youth also do well in leadership roles because of their understanding of how to communicate their needs and take charge of situations.

However, there are multiple stressors that families and youth experience. The staff listed a wide variety of stressors that families experience such as unemployment, money, mental health, transportation, food, and housing. These adults must deal with the stigma of being homeless and know that other people know about their situation. As one part-time staff stated, "People talk about homeless parents in such a negative way; it beats down on their self-esteem". Their children may also get bullied just because they are not wearing nice clothes or because they are living in a homeless shelter. These teens are not dealing with regular teenager issues;

rather they wonder where they are sleeping that night, or if they will have enough food to eat. It can be harder for them to form relationships with others because they move frequently which can impact whether they reach out for help or not. The biggest problem staff witness is that the relationship between family members declines. Families are affected by different stressors and may not be able to concentrate on being a family.

There was a consensus that yes, there is a need for programming for youth and their parents. The Poverty Reduction Manager spoke of how there is a continuum of care, a HUD initiative that pushes to make receiving services easier. Which means that housing families is the priority and by receiving government funding, homeless shelters like Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter cannot legally make attending programming mandatory. They can only give guests the option to see the case manager and attend programming classes. Staff agreed that guests usually like programming such as the Mercy Nurses doing the health classes or the weekly Art Nights.

When considering the two different programs, Strengthening Families Program and the Multiple Family Group by Davey (2004), there was consensus that the topics covered by the programs would be great. However, the Davey weekend program may not work for the shelter. Currently at the shelter, one rule is that families must be in the shelter by 9 p.m. It would be preferred to conduct a program during the week because the week is structured and promotes the routine of responsibility. The weekend is meant to regroup and give the families time to reflect.

Regarding the Strengthening Families Program, the staff were unsure about the seven sessions, totaling seven weeks, because of the unknown length of stay by guests. The Poverty Reduction Manager suggested to shorten the ISU program into a one-time session that is a “Cliff Notes” version of the overall program to capture the audience and keep them engaged. The

program can be then offered at a different location so that it can be open to the community not just those living at the shelter. The staff were all unsure if the families would even participate in such programming. Incentives may be needed behind a timeline for families to join and participate in the program.

There were differences in opinion among the staff about the timeline of the program. The Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter is only a thirty-day shelter with an option of an extension with families moving in and out of the shelter throughout the weeks. There were multiple suggestions such as offering weekly classes at different days and times, adjusting to the group needs. One-time classes may be beneficial, especially not knowing how long they will live in the shelter. Different topics could be offered as well as flexible programming based on what the youth need. How to engage the families and youth may just depend on the individual, and a strong leader to lead and promote these programs is necessary in this ever-changing environment.

### **Background of Guests**

During the three days interviews took place, there were only twenty-three guests, twelve of whom were children under age eighteen. Two rooms were empty, two families just moved so they were not asked to participate in the interview, two families said no to being interviewed, and four families consented to being interviewed.

The first family consisted of a single mom with a six-year-old son. The second family consisted of two parents with two sons, eight and five years old. The third family was a single mother with two sons, ages nineteen and ten years old. The fourth family consisted of a single mother with a one-year old daughter.



## **Guest Interviews**

The first question was whether there was anything the shelter lacks for youth. There was a consensus that there were not any electronics or types of gaming systems for them. The house does have a playground and a play area; however, there are not any age appropriate games or equipment for youth ages 10 and older. The shelter's playroom is often used by younger children, and the TV in the living room is often used by the parents.

When asked what they thought did work for the older youth, two parents stated that they liked that it was easy to interact with other youth because of the open floor concept with the living room and dining room area. The families are not secluded from each other and can interact if they would like. This made it easier for their children to adjust to being at the shelter, knowing that they are not the only children there. One mom stated that the house was not a stressful environment and having the rules helped her child with disabilities adjust to living at the shelter. The families liked that they received free memberships at the YMCA, which was just down the street, so it gave them a free alternative to being stuck at the house the entire day.

The families stated that it took time to become comfortable with the rules and expectations of the shelter. One parent explained that their family were overwhelmed at first with the rules of the shelter. It would be difficult at moments to remember rules such as not walking around barefoot or not being able to drink coffee while watching TV in the living room. The shelter was a new environment and it took time to adjust. The families agreed that having to adjust to the time schedule of the shelter was hard. For example, only being able to eat at certain times or having a daily curfew of 9 p.m. were some of the biggest adjustments for the families. However, the families really appreciated the consistency and wanted to adapt this into their own lives after leaving the shelter. One mother expressed her gratitude of having the rules and

reliability of knowing what was expected of her family. Now at the shelter she was able to focus on one thing at a time rather than worrying about everything at once.

Parents were asked if they would participate in a program that brought parents and their youth together to discuss topics such as discipline and communication. All the parents said yes, they would absolutely participate in such a program. One parent highlighted how discipline would be a topic she would be interested in learning more about because her boys are different ages and it can be difficult for the kids to understand that there is an age difference between them. The parent wants her children to have each other's back during tough times because they are family and hopes to convey that to her children. Another parent stated that she would like to learn more about how to make her children listen to her and be friends with them. As her boys grow older, she wants them to communicate with her about whatever is wrong in their lives. Another parent wanted topics about literacy and for the program to have incentives for the youth. They would like hands-on programming which would work better for their child as well.

One parent believes that what works for one youth may not work for another so having flexibility with program delivery would be beneficial. They would prefer a program that is discussion based, not just somebody talking at them, telling them what to do. They think that their children would like it because then they get to spend time with youth who are their age and discuss things that may be affecting them as well. The parents stated they would prefer a program on the weekends rather than the weekday because of the time rules they must follow at the shelter. They do not have much time at night to do programming and would rather take the time on the weekends to participate in it.

Overall the guests wanted what was best for their children and it was very visible as they spoke about their children. The parents knew that there were things they could improve on and were open to the possibilities of giving their children everything necessary to survive.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

After listening to the staff and parents, I would recommend an adapted program based on the Strengthening Families Program for the families living at the Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter. The Davey (2004) program would not work for the environment because of different factors. The first is that often there is not a large group of youth ages ten to fourteen living in the shelter at a given time. There would not be enough people for each group to do a breakout session. The program would be most beneficial if the youth and parents are able to talk to their peers about the topic of the session. Families may not be able to commit that amount of time on two different days for the program, especially for the sessions on Saturday that last six hours. The weekends are times for the families to regroup, or they may often have work during the scheduled program time. Conducting programming for shorter periods of time may work better for this shelter.

The Strengthening Families Program would be the best program to adapt for the shelter to use for parent-youth programming. This program covers a variety of topics that are specific for youth, parents, and for them to learn together. It allows for discussion and hands-on learning which parents stated in their interviews would work best for them. The shelter needs a program like this that will further enhance the families' lives and give them the skills to use as they move onto the next step after leaving the shelter. Given the lack of older youth-orientated activities within the shelter, this will give youth something within the shelter that is specifically for their age group that they feel a part of.

There are limitations with the Strengthening Families Program because of the lack of youth ages ten to fourteen that come to the shelter. The shelter will need to be flexible on how they implement programming due to the variety in timing of youth entering the shelter. The

youth program may not be held during the weeks youth are not present at the shelter. Once a youth enters the shelter, the program can begin for them. A youth entering the shelter may join in programming any time. The youth program will be held only once a week for forty-five minutes with a discussion and activity taking place during that time. During the 45-minute weekly sessions with just the youth, they will receive an option of the topics from the Strengthening Families Program. This way they are actively engaged and have the sense of control over what they will be learning. Youth will be able to engage with their parents during the weekend session.

The weekend sessions should be done with both parents and youth because they may have more time to do a longer session on the weekend. These sessions can run for an hour and a half, which allows time for the families to learn, discuss, and do an activity about the topic. The sessions on weekends with the parents will run on a rotating basis so the families will learn together and engage in discussion and activities as well. Please see Appendix C for topics and activities to be covered. I would recommend that parents who do not have youth ages ten to fourteen still be allowed to participate in the weekend session because they can learn skills that will be useful as their children grow. It would be best for the staff to survey the families once they enter the shelter on what type of programming they would like and if they would attend a family focused program. This could be done one week after they arrive to avoid being overwhelmed with paperwork.

Another limitation for the Strengthening Families Program is the length of stay. Each family at the shelter is limited to thirty days, and completing every lesson in the Strengthening Families Program may be difficult. For this reason, the Strengthening Families Program will be shortened to fit a 45-minute weekly youth session and a weekly hour and a half session for youth

and their parents. There is a total of seven sessions, so any youth or parent should be able to join the session without going through the previous lesson. For new youth or parents joining the group for the first time, they can come five minutes early for a quick orientation on what to expect from the program. The sessions will be led by staff who will guide the youth and the families. Staff will be trained on the Strengthening Families Program first and the case manager will be able to shorten the program as necessary to fit each of the topics from Appendix C. Staff will use the lessons and activities from the Strengthening Families Program as a basis for each of the sessions. Staff will need to be flexible in how they adjust their program to fit the guests' needs as well.

## **Conclusion**

Homeless families with youth have many barriers that they must overcome as they navigate homeless life. Living in a homeless shelter may be a short respite for the family which can provide different opportunities for parents to gain back control of their lives. The youth who live with these families also have many stressors in their life, which can emerge as they stay at the homeless shelter. Youth living in a homeless shelter may have barriers in their way, but by having access to services such as a program specifically for them, may begin to build the protective shield they need to navigate life. Programming will give them the opportunity to build upon the Five Cs of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) Framework that they already have. They can use and strengthen their competence, confidence, and connection as they navigate living in a family homeless shelter and further develop them in programming with other youth. Basing programming on PYD will give youth the opportunity to enhance their lives by working towards a positive goal.

Family homeless shelters like Catholic Charities Emergency Family Homeless Shelter can provide an educational experience like the Strengthening Families Program, which would not only positively impact the youth but their whole family as well. Supporting youth during this critical time in their lives is important because they are at the age they can process the information and use the skills they learn as needed. Youth in homeless families are strong and resilient, but should always be supported as they begin their path to adulthood.

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## APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Questions for Parents

1. What about this shelter works well for older kids?
2. Is there anything missing in this shelter that older kids would benefit from?
3. What would make it easier for youth to adjust to living at this shelter?
4. Would you participate if we offered a program for youth and their parents? (show examples a and b)
5. What topics would like you like to see covered in this program?
5. What methods of delivery would you be most likely to engage with?
6. What's the best timeline that would work for your schedule?

### Questions for Staff

1. What are some strengths you see in homeless families? What are strengths you see in the youth who are part of the homeless families?
2. What are some stressors you see in homeless families? What are stressors you see in the youth who are part of the homeless families?
3. Do you think there is a need for programming for youth and their parents that live at St. Josephs family shelter?
4. Here is a brief overview of the two different programs (show example a and b). I am looking at to see if they would work for this shelter. Do you think either program would be best for this shelter?
5. Is there a best timeline/structure of programming that would work in this 30 day limit shelter?

6. Do you think parents would be willing to participate? Do you think the youth would?

Examples.

a.) Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, called Strengthening Families

Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14 (2019). It is a seven-session program that has the parents and teens do separate activities, then activities together. The program helps parents/caregivers learn nurturing skills to support their children and how to effectively discipline and guide their youth.

b.) The second program that may be recommended is by Davey (2004), who conducted a program for families living in a homeless shelter. This program had parents and children participating in weekend retreats with sessions covering topics such as: building trust, identifying family strengths, communication, stress management, and decision-making responsibilities. MFG weekend retreats were held on Friday evenings from 5:30 PM until 8:00 PM and continued on Saturday from 9:00 AM until 4:00 PM in the evening.

**APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORM**

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWS**

Supporting Youth Living in Family Homeless Shelter

Masters Proposal Paper

Kelsy Reynaga

North Dakota State University

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to be interviewed for an independent project entitled, Supporting Youth Living in Family Homeless Shelter, which is being produced by Kelsy Reynaga, graduate student at the North Dakota State University.

I understand my participation in this interview is voluntary and will not have impact on my stay at Catholic Charities Emergency Family Shelter. I have been communicated about the confidentiality of information collected for this project and the anonymity of my participation and my family. Prior to agreeing to participate in this interview, I acknowledge I have received satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning the project procedures and related matters. Further, I have been advised I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in one interview for this project. The interview will not be electronically recorded. I understand the interview and related materials will be retained as completely anonymous.

I understand the results of this study may be published in an academic journal or book, notwithstanding the agreed-upon provisions as stated above.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewee

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewer

Cc: Signed copy to interviewer.

Signed copy in guest file.

Signed copy to guest.

### APPENDIX C. TOPICS COVERED BY THE SESSIONS

<b>Topics for Youth</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Coping Skills	Discussion: what are some everyday problems and ways we can manage our stress Activity: Participate in a yoga and meditation session.
Hopes and Dreams	Discussion: what do you want to be Activity: write on card-group discussion on what steps necessary to take to reach goal/dream
Appreciation	Discussion: what is appreciation Activity: toss the ball: complimenting each other, saying what we appreciate
Reaching out to others	Discussion: who do we talk to when we have a problem Activity: researching on web different programs

<b>Topics for Youth and Parents</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Positive Interaction with Each Other	Discussion: what does positivity mean and look like Activity: create list of ways to spend family time
Family Values	Discussion: what do we value most in our family Activity: Family strengths-families create a poem etc. of what their family means/stand for
Active Listening	Discussion: what is active listening and Activity: How Well Do We Know Each Other Game (Family Session 1 Activity 1.3 from Strengthening Families Program)
Rules and Responsibilities	Discussion: responsibilities vs. rules Activity: Create a list of both parents' and youths' responsibilities that they can manage