

# **A STUDY OF YOUTH REOFFENDING IN CALGARY**

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, the City of Calgary, the Alberta Law Foundation, or the Calgary Police Service.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Executive Summary .....	ix
Acknowledgements .....	xvii
Foreword .....	xix
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Purpose of the Report.....	2
1.3 Objectives of the Report .....	2
1.4 Organization of the Report.....	2
2.0 Methodology.....	3
2.1 Research Design .....	3
2.1.1 Research Questions.....	3
2.2 Youth Offender Profiles.....	3
2.2.1 Participants .....	3
2.2.2 Data Sources .....	5
2.2.3 Data Analysis .....	5
2.3 Patterns of Youth Reoffending.....	6
2.3.1 Participants .....	6
2.3.2 Data Source .....	6
2.3.3 Data Analysis .....	6
2.3.4 Limitations .....	6
3.0 Profiles of Youth Offenders In Calgary .....	9
3.1 Offender Profiles.....	9
3.1.1 Demographic Characteristics .....	9
3.1.2 Family and Personal Characteristics.....	9

	Page
3.1.3 Educational Experience .....	18
3.1.4 Social Life .....	21
3.1.5 Community Characteristics .....	24
3.1.6 Self-reported Delinquency.....	27
3.1.7 Knowledge of and Experience with Gangs.....	38
4.0 Youth Reoffending Patterns .....	41
4.1 Reoffending Patterns .....	41
4.2 Factors Associated with Reoffending.....	43
4.2.1 Individual Factors Domain.....	44
4.2.2 Family Factors Domain .....	50
4.2.3 Peer Group Factors Domain .....	52
4.2.4 School Factors Domain.....	54
4.2.5 Community Factors Domain.....	55
4.3 Number of Risk Factors .....	56
4.4 Number of Domains with Risk Factors.....	61
4.5 Best Predictors of Youth Reoffending.....	61
4.5.1 Individual Factors Domain.....	62
4.5.2 Family Factors Domain .....	62
4.5.3 Peer Factors Domain .....	62
4.5.4 School Factors Domain.....	63
4.5.5 Community Factors Domain.....	63
5.0 Summary and Conclusions.....	65
5.1 Summaries.....	65
5.1.1 Youth Offending Profiles .....	65
5.1.2 Youth Reoffending Patterns .....	72
5.2 Discussion and Conclusions .....	75
5.2.1 Discussion.....	75
5.2.2 Conclusions .....	81
References.....	83

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

	Page
Table 3.1: Demographic Characteristics, by Study Group .....	10
Table 3.2: Family Characteristics, by Study Group .....	11
Table 3.3: Employment and Financial Characteristics, by Study Group .....	12
Figure 3.1: Proportion of Youth Who Had Ever Run Away from Home, by Study Group .....	13
Figure 3.2: Proportion of Youth with a History of Family Violence, by Study Group .....	14
Table 3.4: Involvement with Child Welfare System, by Study Group .....	15
Table 3.5: Respondents' Psychological Assessment/Counselling History, by Study Group .....	15
Figure 3.3: Mental Health Diagnoses, by Study Group .....	16
Figure 3.4: Selected Mental Health Diagnoses, by Study Group of Diagnosed Youth .....	17
Table 3.6: Number of Mental Health Diagnoses, by Study Group of Diagnosed Youth .....	18
Table 3.7: School Characteristics, by Study Group .....	19
Figure 3.5: Types of Weapons Taken to School, by Study Group .....	20
Table 3.8: Characteristics of Respondents' Friendships, by Study Group .....	22
Table 3.9: Characteristics of Respondents' Leisure Activities, by Study Group .....	23
Table 3.10: Respondents' Feeling of Safety in Their Community, by Study Group .....	24
Figure 3.6: Types of Weapons Carried in Community, by Study Group .....	25
Table 3.11: Characteristics of Respondents' Public Transit Use, by Study Group .....	26

	Page
Table 3.12: Respondents' Alcohol and Drug Use, by Study Group .....	28
Table 3.13: Respondents' Other Drug Activities, by Study Group .....	31
Table 3.14: Respondents' Public Transit Delinquency, by Study Group.....	32
Table 3.15: Respondents' Involvement in Property Crimes, by Study Group .....	34
Table 3.16: Respondents' Involvement in Person Crimes, by Study Group .....	36
Table 3.17: Respondents' Knowledge of and Experience with Gangs, by Study Group.....	38
Table 3.18: Characteristics of Respondents' Gangs, by Study Group.....	40
Table 4.1: Number of Youth Who Reoffended Following Youth Offender Interview Across Study Groups.....	41
Table 4.2: Number of Youth Who Reoffended Following Youth Offender Interview by Study Group.....	42
Table 4.3: Total Number of Reoffences at Any Point Following Youth Offender Interview by Study Group.....	43
Table 4.4: Personal Characteristics of Youth by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview .....	44
Table 4.5: Drug and Alcohol Related Behaviour Among Youth by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview.....	45
Table 4.6: Ever Engaging in Property-related Delinquent Behaviour Among Youth by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview .....	46
Table 4.7: Ever Engaging in Person-related Delinquent Behaviour Among Youth by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview .....	47
Table 4.8: Mental Health Characteristics of Youth by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview.....	48
Figure 4.1: Statistically Significant Factors Related to Youth Reoffending within the Individual Factors Domain .....	50

Table 4.9:	Family Characteristics of Youth by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview .....	51
Figure 4.2:	Statistically Significant Factors Related to Youth Reoffending within the Family Factors Domain .....	52
Table 4.10:	Leisure Time Activities and Gang Involvement of Youth by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview .....	53
Figure 4.3:	Statistically Significant Factors Related to Youth Reoffending within the Peer Group, School, and Community Factors Domains .....	54
Table 4.11:	School-related Characteristics of Youth by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview .....	55
Table 4.12:	Community-related Characteristics of Youth by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview.....	56
Table 4.13:	Number of Statistically Significant Risk Factors Exhibited by Youth by Reoffending .....	57
Figure 4.4:	Average Number of Statistically Significant Risk Factors within Each Domain, by Youths' Reoffending .....	59
Figure 4.5:	Regression Analysis of Percentage of Youth Who Reoffended by Number of Risk Factors .....	60
Table 4.14:	Number of Domains Within Which Youth Exhibited Statistically Significant Risk Factors by Reoffending .....	61
Table 5.1:	Summary of Significant Risk Factors for Reoffending, by Domain.....	80





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

In 2006, the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family began work on a three-year study of youth offending in Calgary. One objective of the study was to develop a model for better understanding why some youth become more seriously involved in crime, while others do not. The first year of the study established a baseline for this model by developing profiles of youth offending in Calgary.<sup>1</sup> With funding from the Alberta Law Foundation, and in partnership with City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services and the Calgary Police Service, the purpose of current report is to use Calgary Police Service data to determine which of the 123 youth profiled in the original study sample went on to reoffend, and further, which factors differentiate repeat from non-repeat offenders. This report will contribute to the body of research on risk and protective factors for youth offending, and further assist the Calgary Police Service, City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services, and other youth-serving agencies, as well as those who work in the youth justice field in general (i.e., judges, lawyers) in developing evidence-based prevention and intervention programs for youth offenders.

The objectives of this report are to:

- Re-examine the files of the 123 youth in the study sample and determine how the study groups differed on individual, family, peer, school, and community factors;
- Identify factors that are related to youth reoffending; and
- Determine the factors that are most important in predicting which youth continued to reoffend from those who did not.

## Methodology

A cohort of 123 youth with various levels of involvement in the youth justice system participated in the study, belonging to four different study groups. They included:

- Serious Habitual Offenders (SHOs): Youth who have been identified by a Multi-Disciplinary Resource Team and the Calgary Police Service, according to specific criteria.
- Chronic Offenders: Youth who have five or more substantive criminal incidents of which they have been found guilty (not including SHOs).

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<sup>1</sup> Findings from the first year of the study are available in MacRae, Bertrand, Paetsch & Hornick (2008) available online at [www.ucalgary.ca/~crlf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~crlf).

- One-time Offenders: Youth who have one substantive criminal incident of which they have been found guilty (with no subsequent charges pending).
- Gateway Participants: Youth who have come into contact with police but have been diverted pre-charge to Gateway, an extrajudicial measures program administered by City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services and the Calgary Police Service.

The following five research questions directed the research:

- (1) How did youth in each of the Gateway, One-time, Chronic, and Serious Habitual Offender groups differ on the five domains of individual, family, peer group, school, and community in the original study profiles?
- (2) How did youth in each of the study groups differ on reoffending?
- (3) Which factors within the five domains of individual, family, peer group, school, and community are significantly related to youth reoffending?
- (4) Is reoffending more likely as the number of risk factors exhibited by a youth increase?
- (5) Does having risk factors in multiple domains increase the likelihood of youth reoffending?

To answer these questions, two major research strategies were adopted:

- (1) The profiles of youth offending in Calgary, developed in the first year of the study, were re-examined to determine how the youth in Gateway, One-time offender, Chronic offender and Serious Habitual Offender (SHO) groups differed on individual, family, peer, school and community factors.
- (2) Follow-up chargeable incident data from the Calgary Police Service Police Information Management System (PIMS) database was used to determine which of the youth in the original study sample reoffended and which risk factors were significantly associated with reoffending. Chi-square and logistic regression analyses were conducted.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

The objectives of the final stage of CRILF's three-year study of youth offending in Calgary were to: re-examine the profiles of the 123 youth in the original study sample and determine how they differed on individual, family, peer, school and community factors; and to determine which factors among the five domains of individual, family, peer, school, and community are most significantly associated with youth reoffending.

The first stage of the three-year study clearly established that youth with different degrees of involvement in the youth justice system also differ on a number of individual,

family, peer, school, and community characteristics (MacRae, Bertrand, Paetsch & Hornick, 2008). These patterns are similar to those found in an increasing body of literature addressing the risk and protective factors associated with youth offending. This knowledge has value for use in public policy, notably by Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force. The Task Force's 2007 report, developed as a result of consultations with communities across the province, stressed the need to understand the characteristics that distinguish young people who engage in criminal behaviour from those who do not. The report further emphasized the importance of identifying and understanding those factors that "buffer young people from risks and promote positive youth development," and in turn prevent them from becoming seriously involved in crime (Alberta Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007:34).

Consistent with this recommendation, the results of CRILF's first report for the study (MacRae et al., 2008) have already generated local policy and program changes, namely in the development of the City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services' Critical Hours Program, providing structured activities to youth during the "critical hours" of 3 pm to 6 pm. The City of Calgary and Calgary Police Service also benefited from the study results in the development of the Multi-Agency School Support Team (MASST) initiative, an early intervention response where a social worker and a police officer team work with children under 12 who exhibit risk factors and offending behaviour, and their families, within the school context. The City of Calgary Youth Probation's newly developed Intensive Support and Supervision Order Program for youth sentenced under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, as well as the Youth Employment Centre Outreach Program, which works with youth in the Calgary Young Offender Centre prior to release, also benefited from the local knowledge generated from the CRILF study.

However, given the descriptive, cross-sectional nature of the profile data collected, it was difficult to determine conclusively which factors significantly predicted the likelihood that the youth in the sample would reoffend. The follow-up police contact data enabled the CRILF project to be one of the very few Canadian longitudinal studies examining the predictive nature of various characteristics in the individual, family, peer, school, and community domains that place youth at risk for reoffending. At the most basic level, nearly half the sample had further contact with the police (chargeable incident) after they were interviewed. As expected, Gateway clients – the least serious of the offender categories – were the least likely to reoffend, particularly more than once, whereas serious habitual offenders were the most likely, averaging roughly 9 reoffences in the period of time examined. Though SHOs are, by definition, more likely to be under police scrutiny, the fact that the research team only examined substantive chargeable incidents (not administration of justice offences/breaches) speaks to the seriousness of their continued offending, as well as the effectiveness of the police in monitoring these high risk offenders. Where Chronic offenders were less likely to reoffend than SHOs, still over half continued to have contact with the police after the initial interview.

Using these reoffending data, the researchers examined which factors among the five domains that have been consistently examined in the literature – individual,

family, peer, school, community – were most highly associated with reoffending among the Calgary study sample.

### Individual Factors Domain

The literature has explored a number of individual factors such as gender, ethnicity, drug/alcohol use, delinquent behaviour, and mental/emotional health, many of which have shown a consistent relationship to repeated, chronic offending (Chung, Hill, Hawkins, Gilchrist, Nagin, 2002; DeGusti, MacRae & Hornick, 2008; Howell 2003; Mullis, Mullis, Cornille, Kershaw, Beckerman & Perkins, 2005; Turner, Hartman, & Bishop, 2007). Interestingly, gender was not found to be significantly associated with reoffending for this study sample. Recent research (Haapanen, Britton, & Croisdale, 2007; Howell, 2003) into criminal careers and life course offending demonstrating that females are increasingly being represented in the population of chronic offenders. CRILF did not find ethnicity or employment status to be significantly related to youth offending.

With regard to substance use, the use of drugs and alcohol was found to differ among the various study groups in the original profiles (MacRae et al., 2008). The reoffending data suggested that though alcohol use was not found to be significant, having used illegal drugs, bought illegal drugs, and sold illegal drugs were significantly associated with reoffending. Similarly, when examining delinquency, property-related offences such as breaking into a house and stolen a car/motorcycle, and person-related offences such as attempting to take something by force or threat of force against the person, or assault significantly distinguished those youth who continued to offend. The study's findings are consistent with a number of studies (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Mullis et al., 2005) that have demonstrated that repeat offenders habitually commit a number of different antisocial acts, often having previous contact with the justice system and well-documented behavioural issues.

This study also found mental health factors to be significantly related to youth reoffending. Though data from the first stage of the study (DeGusti et al., 2008) indicated that youth more seriously involved with the justice system were more likely to have very complex mental health issues (i.e., multiple diagnoses), tests of significance found that ADD/ADHD or FASD diagnoses were significantly related to repeat offending behaviour. Importantly, all of the youth with a diagnosis of FASD reoffended. This finding is reinforced by Mullis et al.'s study (2005), where 60% of their sample of chronic youth offenders were diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) or ADD at some point. Evidence is also building with regard to the relationship between FASD and criminal behaviour, with Turner and colleagues' (2007) study finding a significant link between chronic youth offending and this disorder.

### Family Factors Domain

The profiles of youth offending in Calgary told an important story regarding the influence of family factors among the sample of youth, particularly with regard to living arrangements, family breakdown, and family violence. The literature has also consistently reported the ill-effects of family violence and breakdown on children and

youth and its relationship to youth offending (Arnull, Gammampila, Archer, Johnson, Miller, & Pitcher, 2005; MacRae et al., 2008; Mullis et al., 2005; Turner et al., 2007), and increasingly, the impact of involvement with children's services (Ryan, 2006; Ryan, Hernandez & Herz, 2007). A recent study of a cohort of over 50,000 youth in British Columbia conducted by the British Columbia Representative for Children and Youth and the Provincial Health Officer (2009) revealed that youth in care are more likely to be arrested and placed in custody, and more likely to be in the youth justice system than to graduate from high school.

Findings from the current study are largely consistent with what has been reported in the literature. Though the profiles (MacRae et al., 2008) indicated noticeable differences between study groups with regard to living arrangements, tests of significance with regard to reoffending confirmed that those youth who do not live with both parents were significantly more likely to reoffend, which is consistent with previous findings (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Howell, 2009). Variables representing family disruption and breakdown, including contact with child welfare, history of foster care or residence in a group home, and running away, were associated with reoffending, consistent with studies conducted in the U.S. and U.K. (e.g., Arnull et al., 2005; Tyler, Johnson, & Brownridge, 2008), and the recent study conducted in British Columbia (British Columbia Representative for Children and Youth and Provincial Health Officer, 2009). Surprisingly, however, family violence and neglect were not significant factors associated with reoffending, despite being a distinguishing family characteristic among the original study sample (MacRae et al., 2008) and a common risk factor reported in the literature (e.g., Arnull et al., 2005; Stewart, Livingston, & Dennison, 2008). However, one limitation of CRILF's data on family violence and neglect is that it was not collected by self-report, but rather from the probation file review; it was also the only family variable where the data were collected in this way. Though probation files often report this type of information, it is possible that violence or neglect may have occurred that was not discovered by the probation officer, or reported in the probation file. Further, youth who have longer histories with youth probation have more extensive background investigations and probation files. Therefore, any youth with shorter probation histories (i.e., One-time offenders and perhaps some Chronic offenders), may not have that kind of information reported in their file. Additionally, the sample of Gateway youth did not have probation file information, and therefore were not included in the analysis of family violence. Thus, the data on family violence and neglect may not be a true reflection of its incidence among the study sample.

### Peer Group Factors Domain

The original profiles of youth offending (MacRae et al., 2008) revealed noticeable differences among the study groups with regard to their social life, with more serious offenders having been more likely to associate with negative and older peers, have gang affiliations or membership, and be less likely to participate in pro-social activities. These patterns are consistent with the literature, particularly with regard to the relationship between gang affiliation and chronic offending (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Howell 2003; Trulson, Marquart, Mullings, & Caeti, 2005). Examining the significance of gang affiliation in relation to reoffending among the study sample further confirmed this link, with having been a member of a gang, or most importantly, having friends who are

gang members, being significantly associated with reoffending. When examining the literature, it is notable that the factors in the individual, family, school, peer, and community domains that place a youth at risk for gang involvement are often the same factors that place a youth at risk for chronic offending, and that these factors often have a cumulative and interactive effect. In addition, having friends who are older was also found to be a significant predictor of reoffending, which is consistently reported in the literature on both chronic youth offending and gang involvement (Howell, 2009).

With regard to extracurricular activities, though participation in organized activities, sports, and clubs/groups with adult leadership was not found to be significantly associated with reoffending, participating in lessons in dance, music, or hobbies or other non-sport activities was found to be a protective factor significantly associated with a decrease in the probability of reoffending. This speaks to the importance of investment in pro-social activities.

### School Factors Domain

It is well-established in the literature that school difficulties are often associated with criminal behaviour among youth (Annull et al., 2005; Mullis et al., 2005). These findings are consistent with previous findings from the CRILF study, which demonstrated noticeable differences in school successes among the study sample, particularly with regard to suspensions, dropping out, and investment (DeGusti et al., 2008; MacRae et al., 2008). In the current study, a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD was found to be a significant individual factor related to youth reoffending, but would also have a significant impact on school performance and success; this finding was confirmed by Mullis et al. (2005). The analyses of school-related factors further confirmed that behaviour issues such as suspensions from school, being bullied in school, getting in fights at school, and having taken a weapon to school were all significantly associated with reoffending. These significant and notable behaviour and learning issues speak to the importance of the school as a point of prevention and early intervention.

### Community Factors Domain

Finally, for the purposes of this report, the researchers looked further into community factors that were associated with youth reoffending, given indications in the literature that neighbourhood/community factors such as the availability of weapons and drugs and the presence of crime and violence were significantly related to persistent offending (Chung et al., 2002; Patterson, Reid & Dishion, 1992). In this study sample, whether the youth carried a weapon and whether gangs were present in the community were significantly associated with reoffending, which is consistent with findings in the literature. However, the literature also suggests that community factors, when mediated by parental supervision and discipline, are not significant predictors (Patterson et al., 1992); further, Turner and colleagues (2007) suggest that community factors often interact with other factors to place a youth at risk for reoffending. Though the CRILF data were not sufficient to test these effects, the impact of the community environment is clear.

## Factor Combinations

Though factors in isolation may be found to be significantly associated with youth reoffending, the literature has increasingly pointed to the fact that a combination of a number of factors and their interactions may better predict chronic or persistent youth offending (Chung et al., 2002; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Turner et al., 2007), particularly when their influence at various stages of development are examined. Though the current data did not allow for a developmental analysis, the significance of both the number of risk factors present and the presence of factors in multiple domains was considered.

Not surprisingly, the likelihood of reoffending increased with the number of risk factors present in the youth. Youth who reoffended had significantly more risk factors present than non-reoffending youth. However, another important finding was that youth who reoffended also had a greater number of risk factors in more domains than youth who did not reoffend, with most youth who reoffended having risk factors in all five domains. Consistent with the literature, youth who reoffended not only had many factors suggesting risk for reoffending, but these risk factors manifest in many areas of their life. This theme is maintained when considering which factors in each domain best predict youth reoffending. For the current sample of youth, a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD is the best individual predictor, contact with child welfare services, particularly when a youth has run away, was the best family factor, having friends who are gang members, in combination with not having participated in non-sport activities, hobbies or lessons, was the best peer predictor, having taken a weapon to school was the best school predictor, and finally, carrying a weapon in the community was the best community predictor. When considered together, the combination of all risk factors paints a picture of complex youth who lack stability, support, and structure, and who require a great deal of specialized service.

The results of CRILF's follow-up study of 123 youth with varying degrees of involvement in the justice system make a valuable contribution to the literature given the longitudinal nature of the data. The followup data were somewhat limited in that the youth could not be reinterviewed and therefore the researchers did not know how their individual, family, peer, community, and school situations may have changed. However, knowing whether youth had continued contact with the Calgary Police Service allowed this study to suggest which factors are most vital for stakeholders to address, permitting more targeted prevention efforts and more effective interventions for youth already involved in the justice system. Given that youth who reoffend manifest risk factors in a number of domains of their life, schools, families, community agencies, and children's services are in a special position to identify youth at risk and initiate support. Future Canadian studies would benefit from following in the path of recent U.S. studies (e.g., Haapanen et al., 2007; Howell, 2003; Mullis et al., 2005; Ryan et al., 2007) which have closely examined the developmental stages at which certain characteristics begin to manifest, or significant social events (e.g., family breakdown, family violence) occur in order to develop more targeted and effective prevention and intervention programs.





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## FOREWORD

In the spring of 2006, the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (CRILF) began work on a three-year project entitled, *A Study of Youth Offending, Serious Habitual Offenders, and System Response in Calgary*. With funding from the City of Calgary (year 1) and the Alberta Law Foundation, and in partnership with City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services and the Calgary Police Service, the study had three main objectives:

- (1) To identify how the implementation of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* has affected the flow of cases through the youth justice system in Alberta and the workload for various components of the provincial youth justice system;
- (2) To develop a better understanding of why some Calgary youth become chronic and serious habitual offenders while others do not; and
- (3) To build a knowledge base for the City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services, Calgary Police Service and other Alberta agencies for increasing their effectiveness and efficiency by conducting an environmental scan of current best practices in Canada related to:
  - predictors (risk and protective factors) of offending by youth;
  - use of decision making instruments and protocols across Canada; and
  - programs targeted at chronic/persistent youth offenders across Canada.

The CRILF study was undertaken due to a number of pressing, complex and controversial issues related to youth offending. First, although youth crime rates have decreased somewhat in Canada since 1991 (Taylor-Butts & Bressan, 2006), issues of youth crime and youth violence are growing political and policy concerns in many countries, including Canada. While the national youth crime rate has not increased in recent years, there have been worrying increases in some communities and for certain specific types of youth crime. Further there is a growing awareness of the social and economic costs of youth offending, both for victims and society as a whole. Justice officials and policy makers are working to develop more effective methods for dealing with youth crime, designing new alternatives to traditional youth justice systems, and finding more effective approaches for handling serious and persistent offenders. One such attempt was the implementation of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)* in Canada in 2003. Replacing the *Young Offenders Act (YOA)*, the YCJA had two main objectives, to reduce the use of courts and custody for the majority of adolescent offenders, and to increase the effectiveness of the response of the youth justice system to serious violent youth offenders. Some of the principles in the Act include recognition of crime prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration, meaningful consequences for a young person, and reparation of harm to victims and the community. While there is a growing body of national and provincial statistical data on the effect of the YCJA on police charging and youth court sentencing, there has been virtually no research on local implementation, effectiveness, and impact of the new Act.

Second, a growing body of literature has suggested that chronic and serious habitual youth offenders, though composing the smallest proportion of the youth offender population, are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime (Carrington, Matarazzo, & de Souza, 2005; Graham & Bowling, 1995; Howell, 2003; Mullis, Mullis, Cornille, Kershaw, Beckerman, & Perkins, 2005; Smith, Bertrand, Arnold, & Hornick, 1995). Though the characteristics of this population have been quite extensively researched in the United States and United Kingdom, little is known about chronic youth offenders in Canada.

Finally, given that chronic and persistent youth offenders are perhaps the highest risk group among the youth offending population, demanding the most community resources, CRILF, along with the Calgary Police Service and City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services, recognized the need for a knowledge base on risk factors and best practices with this offender group.

To date, as part of this project, the CRILF research team has produced a number of reports which address these issues and reflect on the specific objectives listed previously. These reports are described briefly here:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) *A Profile of Youth Offenders in Calgary: An Interim Report* (MacRae, Bertrand, Paetsch, & Hornick, 2008)

To contribute to an understanding of why some youth become more seriously involved in crime than others, the first report of the project examined the nature and extent of youth offending in Calgary, toward the development of a profile of youth offenders. Three main research strategies were undertaken in an effort to address this objective. First, aggregate youth crime trends in Calgary were examined, confirming previous findings that suggested a very small proportion of youth commit a disproportionate amount of crime. Analyses of youth crime data found that the 42 youth offenders designated as Serious Habitual Offenders (SHOs) by the Calgary Police Service, though representing only 1% of the youth offending population, were responsible for 6% of the chargeable incidents involving youth in 2006. Second, the police contact histories of 42 SHOs were compared with a similar group of non-SHOs, demonstrating that SHOs have an earlier onset of recorded chargeable incidents, which escalate more quickly and to a greater extent than for non-SHOs. Finally, the researchers conducted life history interviews and probation file reviews with 123 youth who had varying degrees of contact with the youth justice system in Calgary. The results reinforced a number of patterns noted in the literature regarding factors associated with chronic or serious youth offending. Findings suggested that a number of individual (e.g., drug use, delinquent behaviour), family (e.g., family violence, involvement with children's services), peer (e.g., association with negative peers, gang association, involvement in prosocial activities), school (e.g., truancy, school difficulties), and community (e.g., carrying weapons in the community) factors distinguish those youth who were more seriously and chronically involved in crime from those who were minor offenders. This report made an important contribution to the literature and the community, and provides the baseline data for the current report.

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<sup>2</sup> Full reports are available on the CRILF website: [www.ucalgary.ca/~crilf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~crilf).

- (2) *An In-Depth Examination of School Investment and Extracurricular Activities by a Youth Offender Cohort* (DeGusti, MacRae, & Hornick, 2008)

The goal of this supplementary report was to provide further insight into the findings regarding school investment and out-of-school activity participation reported in *A Study of Youth Offending in Calgary: An Interim Report*. The supplementary report produced a number of interesting findings with regard to school investment, specifically, how school structure and experiences might impact upon a youth's investment in school. It was apparent that the more serious offenders attending West View School, located in the Calgary Young Offender Centre (CYOC), had more positive attitudes about school and their teachers than those more serious offenders who were attending school in the community.

The findings also suggested that youth who are disengaged from the community are more likely to commit delinquent acts. Therefore, programs with drop-in participation may be a viable option for youth who are not able to regularly participate in activities, while subsidized extracurricular activities may also be helpful for those who cannot afford the cost associated with enrolment fees or equipment. For the many high risk youth who reported being involved in unstructured activities (non-organized sports, self-taught music, "hanging out" with peers, etc.), further research on the appeal of unstructured activities to youth might translate into affordable, adult-supervised activities, where there is greater opportunity for positive interactions with adult role models and a greater likelihood of reducing reoffending .

- (3) *The Impact of the Youth Criminal Justice Act on Case Flow in Alberta and System Response in Calgary* (DeGusti, 2008)

This report addresses the first objective of the project, examining the impact of the enactment of the *YCJA* in Alberta. The report provides a detailed analysis of youth justice system caseflow, as well as information obtained from focus groups conducted with police and probation officers in Calgary working with the *Act*. Findings from the study indicate that the *YCJA* has resulted in very significant decreases in the use of courts and custody for responding to youth offending in Alberta, without an increase in youth crime.

- (4) *Best Practices for Chronic/Persistent Youth Offenders* (2009)

This report, which will be released at the conclusion of the project, addresses the final objective of the study by providing information regarding best practices with persistent youth offenders. CRILF researchers conducted a literature review and environmental scan of best practices in screening and programming for this population of youth offenders in Canada. The scan includes a review of the international literature discussing predictors (risk and protective factors) and proven best practices, as well as a scan of screening tools, initiatives, and programs in Canada for chronic and persistent offenders.



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Youth crime and violence have been a growing concern to the public in Canada in recent years, as well as in other countries. The public perception that youth crime and violence are on the rise has been fuelled to some extent by a small number of particularly heinous incidents which have been highly publicized. These incidents have resulted in appeals for a tough law-and-order approach which would rely on longer sentences to deter youth from committing crimes. Interestingly, while public concern about youth crime appears to be increasing, the youth crime rate actually peaked in 1991 (Taylor-Butts & Bressan, 2006).

Recent research has revealed that a relatively small proportion of the youth offender population, labelled as chronic or persistent offenders, is responsible for a disproportionate number of criminal occurrences (Carrington, 2007; Graham & Bowling, 1995; Howell, 2003; Mullis et al., 2005; Smith, Bertrand, Arnold, & Hornick, 1995). In an effort to understand this population of youth offenders, a number of studies have focused on factors in the individual, family, peer, school, and community domains that place a youth at risk for chronic or persistent offending. Individual factors such as mental and emotional health (Mullis et al., 2005; Turner, Hartman, & Bishop, 2007), learning disabilities, neurological deficits due to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), drug/alcohol abuse (Howell, 2009), and attitudinal characteristics (Haapanen, Britton, & Croisdale, 2007) have been shown to be related to chronic youth offending. Family violence and breakdown (Arnull, Eagle, Gammampila, Archer, Johnston, Miller, & Pitcher, 2005; British Columbia Representative for Children and Youth and the Provincial Health Officer, 2009; Mullis et al., 2005; Turner et al., 2007) have often been cited as associated family factors, as have involvement with children's services (Ryan, 2006) and sibling involvement in crime (Arnull et al., 2005; Mullis et al., 2005).

Association with deviant and dysfunctional peers (Arnull et al., 2005; Chung et al., 2002; Mullis et al., 2005) and involvement in gangs (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Howell, 2003) have also been shown to be important peer-related factors associated with chronic youth offending. With regard to school factors, youth who become persistent offenders have often been shown to be truant (Arnull et al., 2005; Mullis et al., 2005), and have disciplinary and learning issues early on (Mullis et al., 2005). Finally, community factors such as the availability of drugs (Chung et al., 2002), poverty, and occurrence of crime and violence (Patterson et al., 1992; Turner et al., 2007), particularly in combination with other factors, have been shown to be significant predictors of chronic youth offending.

Though individually these factors have been found to predict chronic offending, recent studies have shown that examining a combination of factors and their influence at different stages in child development better predicts the likelihood of youth engaging in criminal behaviour (Chung et al., 2002; Howell, 2009; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Turner et al., 2007).

Though the United States and the United Kingdom have contributed considerably to the body of research in this area, there are few Canadian studies examining this population of youth offender (Carrington, 2007; Carrington, Matarazzo, & de Souza, 2005; Day et al., 2008; LeBlanc, 2005; Tremblay, 2000). In an effort to address this gap, the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (CRILF) conducted a three-year project of *Youth Offending, Serious Habitual Offenders, and System Response in Calgary*. The first stage of the project examined the patterns of youth offending in Calgary, and looked closely at a sample of 123 youth involved with the justice system to assess the individual, family, peer, school, and community factors that differentiate chronic and serious habitual offenders from minor offenders. However, in order to determine which of these factors best predict reoffending among the Calgary sample (N=123), a longitudinal element was necessary.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Current Report**

With funding from the Alberta Law Foundation, and in partnership with City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services and the Calgary Police Service, the purpose of this report is to use Calgary Police Service data to determine which of the 123 youth in the original study sample went on to reoffend, and further, which factors differentiate repeat from non-repeat offenders. This report will contribute to the body of research on risk and protective factors for youth offending, and further assist the Calgary Police Service, City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services, and other youth-serving agencies in developing evidence-based prevention and intervention programs for youth offenders.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Report**

The objectives of this report are to:

- (1) Re-examine the profiles of the 123 youth in the study sample and determine how the study groups differed on individual, family, peer, school, and community factors;
- (2) Identify factors that are related to youth reoffending; and
- (3) Determine the factors that are most important in predicting which youth continue to reoffend from those who did not.

## **1.4 Organization of the Report**

This report is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2.0 outlines the methodology used to develop the youth offender profiles in the original data collection phase of the project as well as the analytical approach used to examine the follow-up data. Chapter 3.0 presents the findings from the first year of the study on the profiles of youth offenders in Calgary. Chapter 4.0 discusses the findings from the youth reoffending analysis. Chapter 5.0 summarizes the results and discusses the implications of the findings for future research and policy development.



## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

As indicated in Section 1.4, the purpose of this report is to re-examine the 123 youth in the original study sample for *A Profile of Youth Offending in Calgary*, and determine what factors most significantly predict reoffending.

#### 2.1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in this report:

- (1) How did youth in each of the Gateway, One-time, Chronic, and Serious Habitual Offender groups differ on the five domains of individual, family, peer group, school, and community in the original study profiles?
- (2) How did youth in each of the study groups differ on reoffending?
- (3) Which factors within the five domains of individual, family, peer group, school, and community are significantly related to youth reoffending?
- (4) Is reoffending more likely as the number of risk factors exhibited by a youth increase?
- (5) Does having risk factors in multiple domains increase the likelihood of youth reoffending?

### 2.2 Youth Offender Profiles

The original study utilized a number of methodologies to develop a profile of youth offenders in Calgary. Most relevant to this examination of youth reoffending are the data collected from interviews and probation file reviews conducted with 123 youth who had varying degrees of contact with the youth justice system. This section will summarize the participants and research strategies involved in the interviews and probation file reviews. For further information on the methodology used in the original study, please refer to the interim report.

#### 2.2.1 Participants

A cohort of 123 youth with various levels of involvement in the youth justice system participated in the study, belonging to four different study groups. They included:

(1) Gateway Clients under Extrajudicial Measures (n=20)

Gateway is a pre-charge extrajudicial measures program under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) that currently operates in all eight police districts in Calgary. Under this program, youth are diverted by the police from the traditional youth justice system to over 25 community agencies that have agreed to offer services to youth. Youth are referred to this program for offences ranging from theft under \$5,000, to mischief, break and enter, and minor assault. Gateway is a partnership of City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services and the Calgary Police Service.

(2) One-time Offenders (n=42)

This group includes youth having one substantive (i.e., *Criminal Code*; *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*) offence or incident of which he/she has been found guilty in youth court (with no subsequent charges pending). *Incident* was defined as all charges pertaining to the same person and having the same date of offence. Administration of justice incidents (e.g., breaches, failures to appear) were not counted as substantive incidents.

(3) Chronic Offenders (n=41)

This group included youth having five or more substantive (i.e., *Criminal Code*, *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*) offences or incidents of which he/she has been found guilty (not including SHOs). Again, *incident* was defined as all charges pertaining to the same person and having the same date of offence. Administration of justice incidents were not counted as substantive incidents.

(4) Serious Habitual Offenders (SHOs) (n=20)

The goal of the Calgary Police Service Serious Habitual Offender Program (SHOP) is to identify youth at risk of a career of crime and provide access to resources in order for them to be successful members of society. Referrals to SHOP are made by the Calgary Police Service, Calgary Young Offender Centre (CYOC), the Calgary Youth Attendance Centre (CYAC), Calgary and Area Child and Family Services, City of Calgary Youth Probation and the public and Catholic school boards. Each referring agency is required to complete an intake form providing information on historical risk factors (e.g., violent acts/offences, exposure to violence), social/contextual risk factors (e.g., peer delinquency, parental management, personal support, etc.), and individual risk factors (e.g., emotional difficulties, attitudes, risk taking, substance use, etc.). Referral information is received by the Calgary Police Service SHOP unit, who check the youth's criminal history. If appropriate for the program, the youth's information is forwarded to the Multidisciplinary Resource Team (MDRT), who review and assess the youth's records and determine whether he/she is appropriate for

SHOP. Youth who are targeted by the program are profiled, with responses based on these profiles being developed to support the youth's successful reintegration. These youth are regularly monitored by the Calgary Police Service.

Gateway participants were identified and recruited through the Gateway program. One-time and Chronic offenders were identified via City of Calgary Youth Probation Services. SHOs were identified with the help of City of Calgary Youth Probation Services and the Calgary Police Service.

### 2.2.2 Data Sources

Life history interviews were conducted with all 123 participants from July 2006 to July 2007. The interview schedule was developed by CRILF researchers, with questions covering seven main topic areas: basic facts (i.e., demographic, familial); community (i.e., community characteristics, feelings of safety); school (i.e., school status, experience); social life (i.e., friends, activities, delinquency); offending history (i.e., contact with the criminal justice system); gangs (i.e., knowledge and experience of gangs in Calgary); and future plans (i.e., goals). Interviews were conducted in person with the exception of Gateway participants, who were interviewed by telephone.

Probation file reviews were conducted for each youth interviewed for the study, with the exception of the Gateway sample (who were not under the jurisdiction of Calgary Youth Probation) and a small number of youth in other groups whose probation files could not be accessed. The file review was meant as a supplemental and validating instrument to the interview.

A probation file review form was developed following a preliminary examination of probation files. The form included demographic, familial, social, and offending information. File reviews were conducted at Youth Probation Offices. Researchers examined each probation file and filled out the electronic review form with the necessary information.

Conviction data were obtained from the Justice Online Information Network (JOIN) to distinguish between the One-time offender and Chronic offender groups.

### 2.2.3 Data Analysis

A total of 123 interviews and file reviews were conducted with Gateway youth (n=20), One-time offenders (n=42), Chronic offenders (n=41), and SHOs (n=20). Interviews and file/JOIN reviews were then coded, with quantitative information being converted to SPSS format.

For the purposes of the offender profiles, analysis of the interview and file review data was conducted descriptively by offender type, with the goal of establishing defining characteristics for each group of offenders. A number of social, individual, and historical factors were used to explore the differences among the four groups of offenders, covering eight main areas: demographic characteristics; family characteristics;

educational experience; social life; community characteristics; self-reported delinquency; knowledge of gangs; and justice system involvement.

## **2.3 Patterns of Youth Reoffending**

To determine which risk and protective factors differentiate youth who reoffend from those who do not, CRILF accessed follow-up police contact data for the original 123 study sample. This, combined with information from the youth offender profiles, was used to examine the significant predictors of youth offending in Calgary.

### **2.3.1 Participants**

The original study sample of 123 youth discussed in Section 2.2.1 was used for the offender follow-ups, belonging to each of the original four study groups: Gateway (n=20); One-time Offenders (n=42); Chronic Offenders (n=41); and SHOs (n=20).

### **2.3.2 Data Source**

As part of CRILF's research agreement with the Calgary Police Service (CPS), follow-up youth crime data were provided for the original study sample (N=123) from the CPS Police Information Management System (PIMS) Database. CRILF requested chargeable incident data at 12- and 24-months post-interview. A chargeable incident is defined as one contact between one individual and police where there is sufficient evidence for an information to be laid. Data were provided to CRILF in SPSS format.

### **2.3.3 Data Analysis**

Analyses of the patterns of youth reoffending took three main forms. First, a descriptive analysis was conducted to determine the number of youth within each group who reoffended within various time periods after their interview. Second, bivariate chi-square analysis was used to pinpoint those factors within the five domains (individual, family, peer, school, and community) that were significantly associated with youth reoffending. Finally, the factors shown to be significant by the chi-square analysis were used in a logistic regression model to determine those factors that were most important in predicting youth reoffending in the study sample.

### **2.3.4 Limitations**

A few limitations are worthy of note. The follow-up data on reoffending were limited to *chargeable incidents*: i.e., to incidents: (i) that were reported to, or otherwise came to the attention of, the Calgary Police Service, and (ii) that the CPS were able to "clear," that is, to obtain sufficient evidence to identify the perpetrator(s) and to conclude that they were chargeable. Therefore, the conclusions of this report on the amount of reoffending and risk factors for reoffending are limited to *official* offending; that is, offending identified as such by the Calgary Police Service. Further, given the follow-up chargeable incident data were provided only by the Calgary Police Service, CRILF could only determine whether the youth had further police contact in Calgary. If a youth offended in another jurisdiction, that offence would not be included in the follow-up data.

Therefore, if a particular youth only reoffended in another jurisdiction, that youth would not be recorded as having a reoffence.

It is important to note that the risk factors identified in this study are not necessarily causes of reoffending but may be consequences of reoffending. It should also be noted that just because a youth may exhibit one or more risk factors, this does not necessarily mean that he or she will reoffend.

Since the youth were only interviewed at the baseline and follow up data were based exclusively on police information, it is possible the changes in life circumstances that occurred after the baseline interviews that may affect reoffending were not measured.

CRILF had originally proposed to conduct follow-ups at 12 and 24-months post-interview. However, given the profile data collection phase had to be extended to increase the sample size, complete data were not available for all youth at 24-months post-interview.

Finally, by selecting the factors that were significant in the chi square analyses to be included in the logistic regressions, it was not possible to examine interactions among all predictive factors. Given the number of factors examined in the original chi-square analyses, it was not possible to include them all in the logistic regressions; thus, those factors that were significantly associated with youth reoffending were selected.



## 3.0 PROFILES OF YOUTH OFFENDERS IN CALGARY

### 3.1 Offender Profiles

This chapter presents the profiles of youth offenders in Calgary developed for the first report of the study. Comparative data are presented for each of the four groups of offenders examined: Gateway clients (n=20); One-time offenders (n=42); Chronic offenders (n=41); and SHOs (n=20).

#### 3.1.1 Demographic Characteristics

Table 3.1 presents selected demographic characteristics of the four study groups. For three of the groups, the majority of youth were male and ranged from 83.3% of the One-time offenders to 100% of the SHOs. Gender was more evenly split in the Gateway group, which consisted of 45% males and 55% females.

With regard to their age at the time of the interview, the majority of youth in all groups except Gateway were 16 years of age or older. Mean ages ranged from 15.6 years for the Gateway clients to 17.0 for the SHOs. A larger proportion of Gateway clients were younger, with the highest proportion (25%) being 14 years of age.

The majority of youth in all groups except the SHOs identified themselves as Caucasian, and ranged from 71.4% of the One-time offenders to 85.4% of the Chronic offenders. In the SHO group, 50% were Caucasian, 30% were Native, and equal proportions (5%) were Métis, Asian, Middle-Eastern, and Hispanic. The substantial majority of youth in all groups were born in Canada, ranging from 90% of the Gateway clients and the SHOs to 97.5% of the Chronic offenders.

#### 3.1.2 Family and Personal Characteristics

##### Family Demographics

Family characteristics of youth in the four study groups are presented in Table 3.2. The majority of youth in the Gateway group reported that their parents were married at the time of the interview (55%), followed by divorced (25%), and never married (10%). Only one respondent reported that their parents were separated and another reported that their parent was widowed. The majority of youth in the other three study groups reported that their parents were never married (21.4% of One-time offenders; 34.1% of Chronic offenders; 35% of SHOs) or divorced (31% of One-time offenders; 24.4% of Chronic offenders; 20% of SHOs).

**Table 3.1**  
**Demographic Characteristics, by Study Group**

Characteristic	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	9	45.0	35	83.3	38	92.7	20	100.0
Female	11	55.0	7	16.7	3	7.3	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Age (at time of interviews)</b>								
13	1	5.0	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
14	5	25.0	6	14.3	1	2.4	0	0.0
15	4	20.0	9	21.4	6	14.8	2	10.0
16	4	20.0	6	14.3	12	29.3	4	20.0
17	4	20.0	10	23.8	11	26.8	8	40.0
18+	2	10.0	10	23.8	11	26.8	6	30.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>								
Caucasian	16	80.0	30	71.4	35	85.4	10	50.0
Native	0	0.0	4	9.5	1	2.4	6	30.0
Metis	0	0.0	1	2.4	2	4.9	1	5.0
Asian	2	10.0	3	7.1	0	0.0	1	5.0
Middle-Eastern	0	0.0	2	4.8	0	0.0	1	5.0
African	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.9	0	0.0
Mulatto	0	0.0	2	4.8	1	2.4	0	0.0
Hispanic	2	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Country of Birth</b>								
Canada	18	90.0	39	92.9	40	97.5	18	90.0
United States	0	0.0	1	2.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Afghanistan	0	0.0	2	4.8	0	0.0	1	5.0
Phillipines	1	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Russia	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.0
Poland	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	0	0.0
South Africa	1	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.



**Table 3.2**  
**Family Characteristics, by Study Group**

Characteristic	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Parents' Marital Status</b>								
Married	11	55.0	14	33.3	7	17.1	5	25.0
Never married	2	10.0	9	21.4	14	34.1	7	35.0
Separated	1	5.0	4	9.5	5	12.2	1	5.0
Divorced	5	25.0	13	31.0	10	24.4	4	20.0
Widowed	1	5.0	2	4.8	4	9.8	3	15.0
Unknown	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Youth's Living Arrangements</b>								
Both parents	10	50.0	14	33.3	5	12.2	5	25.0
One parent	10	50.0	19	45.2	14	34.1	11	55.0
Extended family	0	0.0	3	7.1	1	2.4	0	0.0
Foster/group home	0	0.0	2	4.8	8	19.5	0	0.0
Independent/partner	0	0.0	4	9.5	3	7.3	0	0.0
Incarcerated	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	22.0	3	15.0
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	1	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Mother Employed</b>								
Yes	19	95.0	31	75.6	26	65.0	11	55.0
No	1	5.0	9	22.0	10	25.0	8	40.0
Unknown	0	0.0	1	2.4	4	10.0	1	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Father Employed</b>								
Yes	16	88.9	30	75.0	20	54.1	14	87.5
No	2	11.1	4	10.0	6	16.2	1	6.3
Unknown	0	0.0	6	15.0	11	29.7	1	6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

In terms of the youths' living arrangements at the time of the interview, equal proportions of the Gateway clients indicated that they lived with both parents or with one parent, with or without siblings. The highest proportion of youth in the other three groups reported that they lived with one parent with or without siblings (45.2% of One-time offenders; 34.1% of Chronic offenders; 55% of SHOs). A total of 22% of the Chronic offenders and 15% of the SHOs were incarcerated at the time of the interview, while 19.5% of the Chronic offenders were living in a foster or group home.

In terms of parents' employment status, the majority of respondents in all groups stated that their mother was employed at the time of the interview, and ranged from 55% of the SHOs to 95% of the Gateway clients. Similarly, the majority of youth reported that their father was employed, ranging from 54.1% of the Chronic offenders to 88.9% of the Gateway clients.

## Personal Characteristics

Respondents were asked about their own employment status, and the findings are presented in Table 3.3. Approximately one-half of the respondents in each group indicated that they were currently employed, and ranged from 45% of the SHOs to 55% of the Gateway clients.

**Table 3.3**  
**Employment and Financial Characteristics, by Study Group**

	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Currently Employed</b>								
Yes	11	55.0	19	45.2	20	48.8	9	45.0
No	9	45.0	23	54.8	21	51.2	11	55.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Number of Hours Worked per Week</b>								
<10	1	9.1	3	16.7	0	0.0	1	11.1
10-30	7	63.6	4	22.2	2	10.0	3	33.3
31-50	3	27.3	8	44.4	13	65.0	5	55.6
>50	0	0.0	2	11.1	4	20.0	0	0.0
Varies	0	0.0	1	5.6	1	5.0	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	11	100.0	18	100.0	20	100.0	9	100.0
<b>Average Dollars Spent Each Week on Food and Going Out</b>								
<\$25	9	45.0	12	30.8	5	12.2	2	10.5
\$25-50	3	15.0	8	20.5	9	22.0	2	10.5
\$50-100	3	15.0	7	17.9	4	9.8	3	15.8
>\$100	4	20.0	11	28.2	21	51.2	12	63.2
Varies	1	5.0	1	2.6	2	4.9	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	39	100.0	41	100.0	19	100.0

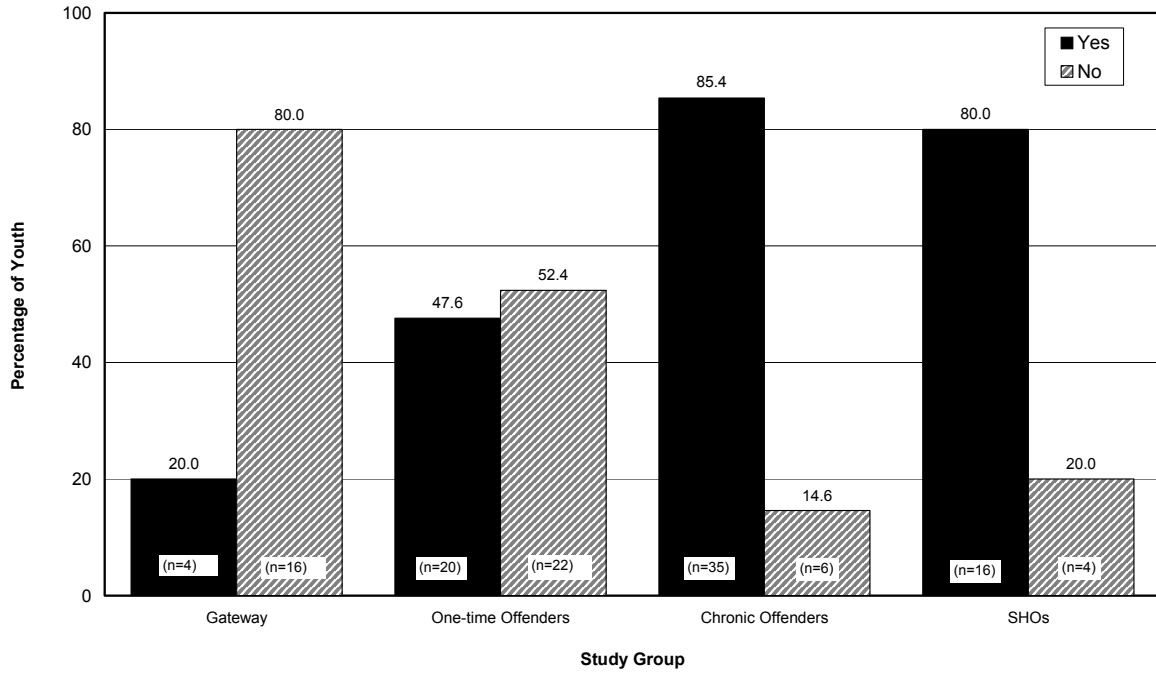
Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

When youth who stated that they were employed were asked how many hours per week they work, the majority of Gateway clients reported that they work between 10 and 30 hours per week (63.6%). One-time offenders (44.4%), Chronic offenders (65%), and SHOs (55.6%) were most likely to state that they work 31 to 50 hours per week.

All respondents were asked to indicate how much money they spend per week, on average, on food and going out. Gateway clients and One-time offenders were most likely to report that they spend less than \$25 per week (45% and 30.8%, respectively). Chronic offenders and SHOs were most likely to state that they spend more than \$100 per week (51.2% and 63.2%, respectively).

Youth were asked if they had ever run away from home, and their responses are presented in Figure 3.1. A substantial majority of respondents in the Chronic offender and SHO groups stated that they had run away from home (85.4% and 80%, respectively). Approximately one-half of the One-time offenders had run away from home (47.6%) and one-fifth of the Gateway clients had run away from home (20%).

**Figure 3.1**  
**Proportion of Youth Who Had Ever Run Away from Home, by Study Group**

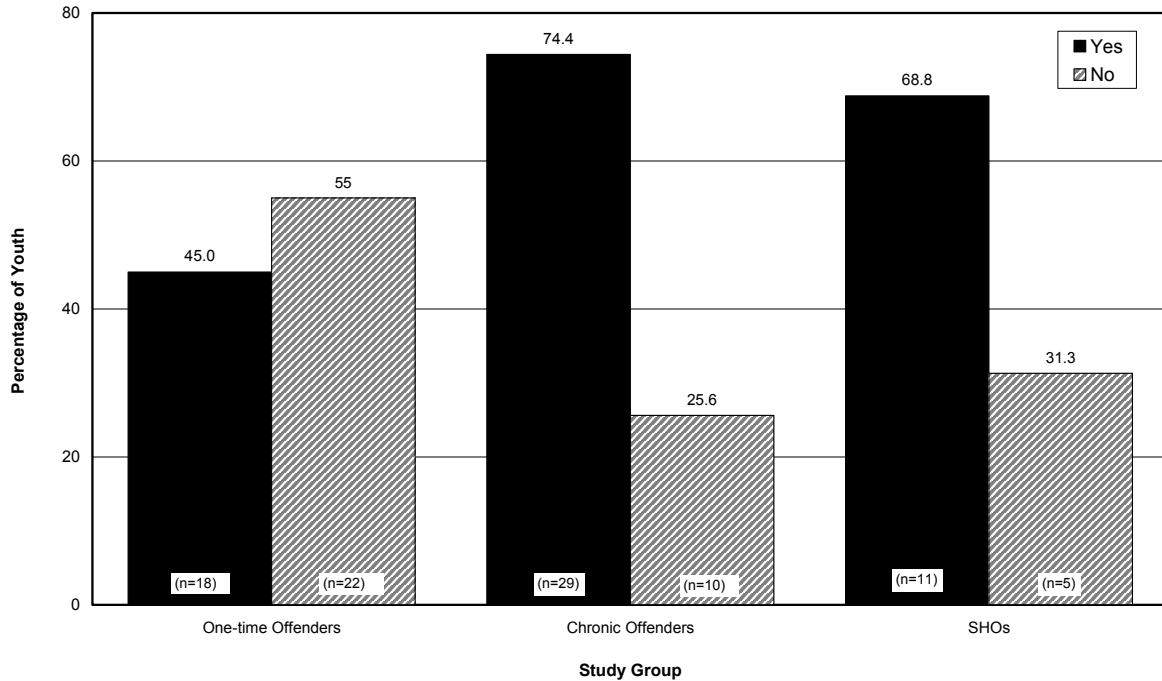


Source of data: Youth Offender Interview.

Total N for Gateway = 20; Total N for One-time Offenders = 42; Total N for Chronic Offenders = 41; Total N for SHOs = 20.

Figure 3.2 presents the proportion of youth in each study group who had a history of family violence (either as a victim or witness of abuse in the home). Since these data were collected from the youth probation files, no information was available for the Gateway clients. The files indicated that the majority of youth in both the Chronic offender group and the SHO group had a history of family violence (74.4% and 68.8%, respectively). In the One-time offender group, 45% had a history of family violence.

**Figure 3.2**  
**Proportion of Youth with a History of Family Violence, by Study Group<sup>1</sup>**



Source of data: Youth Probation File Review.

Total N for One-time Offenders = 42; Total N for Chronic Offenders = 41; Total N for SHOs = 20.

<sup>1</sup> Gateway youth do not have probation files, therefore there are no data for this study group.

### Child Welfare Involvement

Table 3.4 presents the proportion of youth in each group who stated that they had various types of involvement with the child welfare system at some point in their lives. The majority of youth in the Chronic offender group (82.9%) and the SHO group (75%) reported that they had involvement with child welfare services. Only a relatively small portion of the respondents in the Gateway group (15%) and a minority in the One-time offender group (35.7%) had a history of involvement with child welfare services.

Youth in the Chronic offender and the SHO groups were most likely to report that they had lived in a foster home (36.6% and 50%, respectively). Similarly, Chronic offenders and SHOs were most likely to indicate that they had lived in a group home (70.7% and 65%, respectively). Gateway clients were least likely to report living in either of these settings.

**Table 3.4**  
**Involvement with Child Welfare System, by Study Group**

	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Contact with Child Welfare Services</b>								
Yes	3	15.0	15	35.7	34	82.9	15	75.0
No	17	85.0	27	64.3	7	17.1	5	25.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Ever Been in Foster Care</b>								
Yes	2	10.0	7	16.7	15	36.6	10	50.0
No	18	90.0	35	83.3	26	63.4	10	50.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Ever Been in a Group Home</b>								
Yes	0	0.0	10	23.8	29	70.7	13	65.0
No	20	100.0	32	76.2	12	29.3	7	35.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

## Mental Health

Table 3.5 presents the proportion of youth in each group who had received psychological services. Since these data were collected from the youth probation files, no information was available for the Gateway clients. A substantial proportion of the Chronic offenders (64.1%) and the SHOs (75%) had a psychological assessment conducted on them at some point. Slightly over one-quarter of the One-time offenders (27.5%) had received a psychological assessment. The majority of youth in all three groups had received counselling at some point, ranging from 67.5% of the One-time offenders to 100% of the Chronic offenders.

**Table 3.5**  
**Respondents' Psychological Assessment/Counselling History, by Study Group**

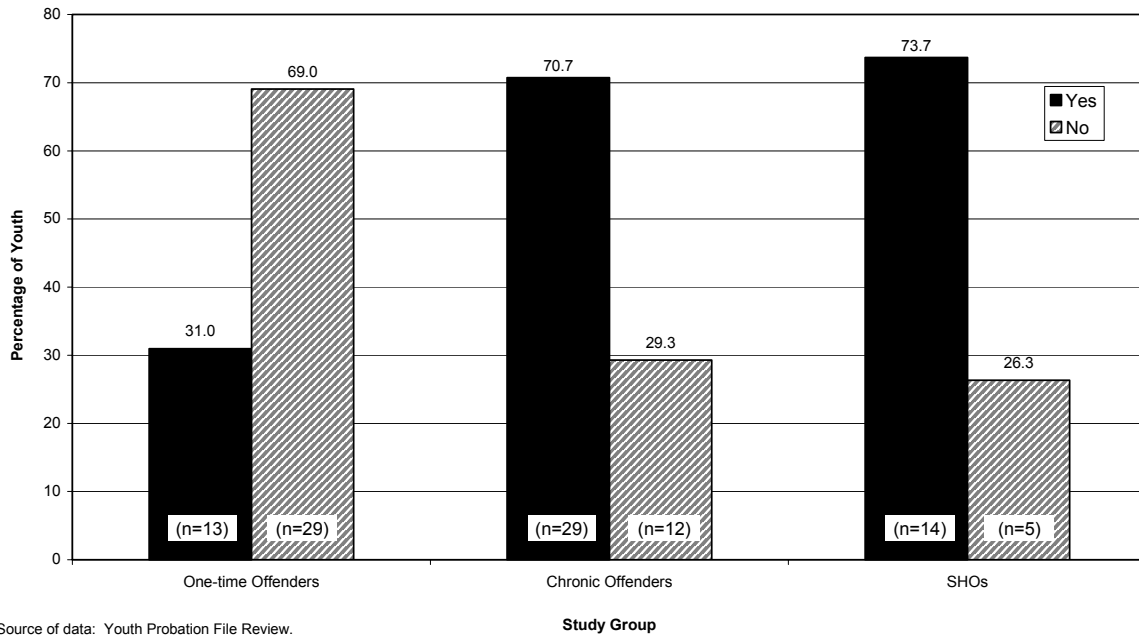
	Gateway <sup>1</sup>		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Ever Had Psychological Assessment</b>								
Yes	--	--	11	27.5	25	64.1	12	75.0
No	--	--	29	72.5	14	35.9	4	25.0
<b>Total</b>	--	--	40	100.0	39	100.0	16	100.0
<b>Ever Had Counselling</b>								
Yes	--	--	27	67.5	39	100.0	14	87.5
No	--	--	13	32.5	0	0.0	2	12.5
<b>Total</b>	--	--	40	100.0	39	100.0	16	100.0

Source of data: Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup>Gateway youth did not have probation files; therefore, there is no data available for this group.

A closer examination of the file review data regarding mental health diagnoses among the study sample revealed findings consistent with the assessment and counselling results. As shown in Figure 3.3, the majority of both Chronic offenders (66.7%) and SHOs (75%) had a confirmed or suspected diagnosis of some form of mental health disorder, while only 30% of One-time offenders had a confirmed or suspected mental health diagnosis.

**Figure 3.3**  
Mental Health Diagnoses, by Study Group<sup>1,2,3</sup>



Source of data: Youth Probation File Review.

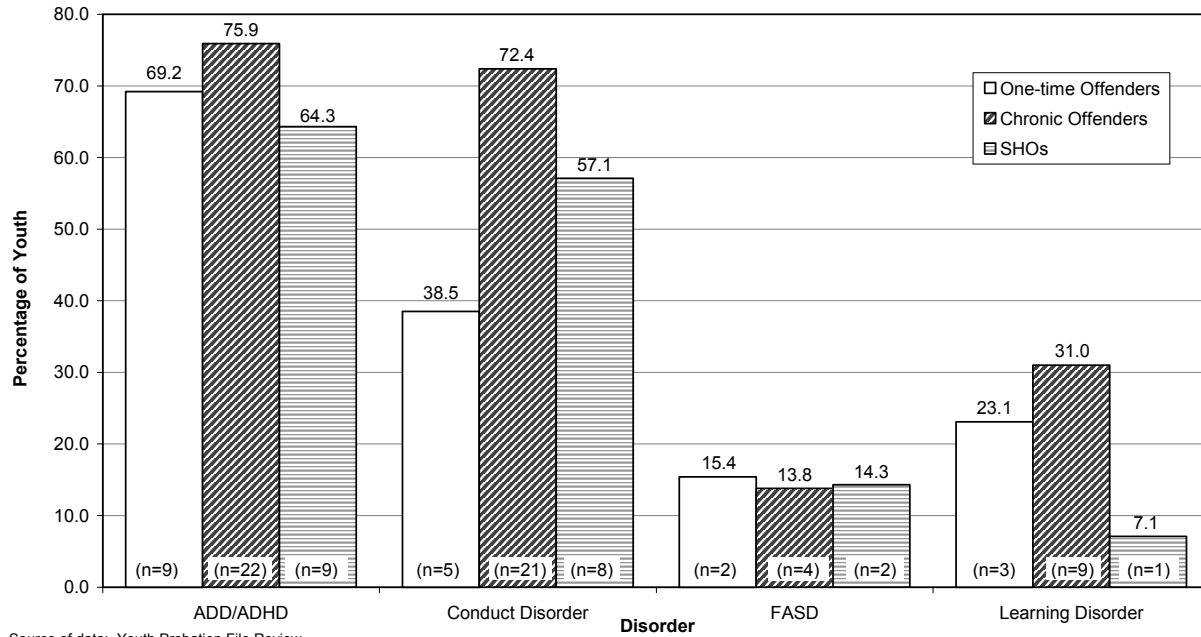
<sup>1</sup> Includes confirmed and suspected mental health diagnoses, including: Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and ADHD, FASD, Dyslexia, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or various conduct disorders, such as ODD.

<sup>2</sup> Data for suspected and confirmed mental health diagnoses were based only on information available in the youth's probation files, which may therefore underestimate the number of diagnoses.

<sup>3</sup> Total N for One-time Offenders = 42; Total N for Chronic Offenders = 41; Total N for SHOs = 19.

Figure 3.4 reveals the prevalence of the most commonly diagnosed disorders among those youth who had a suspected or confirmed diagnosis. These included Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Conduct Disorder, FASD, and Learning Disorder. When examining the prevalence of ADD/ADHD among the youth with suspected or confirmed diagnoses, three-quarters (75.9%) of Chronic offenders, over two-thirds (69.2%) of One-time offenders, and 64.3% of SHOs had an ADD/ADHD diagnosis. Further, only 38.5% of One-time offenders and just over half (57.1%) of SHOs had a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of Conduct Disorder, compared to nearly three quarters (72.4%) of Chronic offenders. With regard to FASD, 15.4% of One-time offenders and 14.3% of SHOs had a confirmed or suspected diagnosis, compared to 13.8% of Chronic offenders. Finally, learning disorder was most prevalent among diagnosed Chronic offenders, with 31% having a confirmed or suspected learning disorder, compared to 23.1% of One-time offenders and only 7.1% of SHOs.

**Figure 3.4**  
**Selected Mental Health Diagnoses, by Study Group of Diagnosed Youth<sup>1,2,3</sup>**



Source of data: Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> Includes confirmed and suspected mental health diagnoses. Suspected cases include youth who were prescribed drugs for the treatment of mental health disorders, with no accompanying psychological assessment report, as well as diagnoses that could not be confirmed by the clinician, but fit criteria for the disorder.

<sup>2</sup> Data for suspected and confirmed mental health diagnoses were based only on information available in the youth's probation files, which may therefore underestimate the number of diagnoses.

<sup>3</sup> Total N for One-time Offenders with at least one diagnosis = 13; Total N for Chronic Offenders with at least one diagnosis = 29; Total N for SHOs with at least one diagnosis = 14.

The probation file data also indicated that many of the youth were diagnosed with multiple mental health disorders. Table 3.6 shows that, in fact, all of the Chronic offenders who had been diagnosed with a mental health disorder had multiple diagnoses, with over one-third (34.5%) having 4 or more confirmed or suspected diagnoses. Nearly two-thirds (64.3%) of the SHOs had multiple diagnoses, with most of these having 2 or 3 confirmed or suspected diagnoses. This compares to 61.6% of One-time offenders with multiple diagnoses, with most of these having two confirmed or suspected diagnoses. Diagnoses ranged from the commonly reported ADHD and Conduct Disorder to the more atypical disorders such as Phonological Disorder, Panic Disorder, Neurobehavioral Disorder and Personality Disorder.

**Table 3.6  
Number of Mental Health Diagnoses,<sup>1,2</sup> by Study Group of Diagnosed Youth**

	Gateway <sup>3</sup>		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Number of Mental Health Disorders</b>								
1	--	--	5	38.5	0	0.0	5	35.7
2	--	--	5	38.5	8	27.6	4	28.6
3	--	--	1	7.7	11	37.9	3	21.4
4 or more	--	--	2	15.4	10	34.5	2	14.3
<b>Total</b>	--	--	13	100.0	29	100.0	14	100.0

Source of data: Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> Includes confirmed and suspected mental health diagnoses. Suspected cases include youth who were prescribed drugs for the treatment of mental health disorders, with no accompanying psychological assessment report, as well as diagnoses that could not be confirmed by the clinician, but fit criteria for the disorder.

<sup>2</sup> Data for suspected and confirmed mental health diagnoses were based only on information available in the youth's probation files, which may therefore underestimate the number of diagnoses.

<sup>3</sup> Gateway youth did not have probation files; therefore, there is no data available for this group.

### 3.1.3 Educational Experience

#### School Performance

Respondents were asked several questions regarding their experiences at school, and Table 3.7 presents these data. The majority of youth in the Gateway (100%), One-time offender (69%), and Chronic offender (68.3%) groups stated that they were attending school at the time of the interview. One-half of the SHO youth (50%) were attending school. It should be noted that findings may somewhat over-estimate school attendance for Chronic offenders and SHOs given those who were interviewed while incarcerated were required to attend school.

Youth who were attending school were asked how much schooling they expected to complete. The majority of the Gateway clients stated that they expected to complete college or university (68.4%) as did the majority of One-time offenders (53.6%). In contrast, the majority of the Chronic offenders (57.2%) and the SHOs (60%) stated that they either didn't expect to finish high school, or that completing high school was the highest level of education they expected to attain.

When youth who were attending school were asked if they skip classes, at least one-half of the respondents in each group stated that they do. Proportions ranged from 50% of youth in the Gateway group to 80% in the SHO group.

Youth who were attending school were also asked if they had ever been suspended. Rates of suspension were quite high for youth in the One-time offender, Chronic offender, and SHO groups, and ranged from 82.1% to 90%. Gateway clients were considerably less likely to report that they had been suspended (40%).



When asked if they had ever considered dropping out of school, the majority of youth who were attending school in the One-time offender (58.6%), Chronic offender (67.9%), and SHO (80%) groups indicated that they had. Less than one-third (30%) of the Gateway clients had considered dropping out of school.

**Table 3.7**  
**School Characteristics, by Study Group**

	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Currently Attending School</b>								
Yes	20	100.0	29	69.0	28	68.3	10	50.0
No	0	0.0	13	31.0	13	31.7	10	50.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Schooling Expected to Complete</b>								
Don't expect to finish high school	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.6	2	20.0
High school	0	0.0	12	42.9	15	53.6	4	40.0
Post secondary, undecided	3	15.8	0	0.0	1	3.6	1	10.0
Technical/trade school	3	15.8	1	3.6	2	7.1	1	10.0
College	5	26.3	5	17.9	5	17.9	1	10.0
University	8	42.1	10	35.7	4	14.3	1	10.0
<b>Total</b>	19	100.0	28	100.0	28	100.0	10	100.0
<b>Skip Classes</b>								
Yes	10	50.0	17	60.7	21	77.8	8	80.0
No	10	50.0	11	39.3	6	22.2	2	20.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	28	100.0	27	100.0	10	100.0
<b>Been Suspended</b>								
Yes	8	40.0	24	82.8	23	82.1	9	90.0
No	12	60.0	5	17.2	5	17.9	1	10.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	29	100.0	28	100.0	10	100.0
<b>Considered Dropping Out</b>								
Yes	6	30.0	17	58.6	19	67.9	8	80.0
No	14	70.0	12	42.4	9	32.1	2	20.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	29	100.0	28	100.0	10	100.0
<b>Ever Been Bullied at School</b>								
Yes	9	45.0	24	57.1	16	39.0	6	30.0
No	11	55.0	18	42.9	25	61.0	14	70.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Ever Been in Fights at School</b>								
Yes	11	57.9	34	81.0	37	90.2	20	100.0
No	8	42.1	8	19.0	4	9.8	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	19	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Ever Taken a Weapon to School</b>								
Yes	1	5.0	15	35.7	20	48.8	15	75.0
No	19	95.0	27	64.3	21	51.2	5	25.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Ever Used a Weapon at School</b>								
Yes	0	0.0	3	21.4	4	20.0	3	23.1
No	1	100.0	11	78.6	16	80.0	10	76.9
<b>Total</b>	1	100.0	14	100.0	20	100.0	13	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

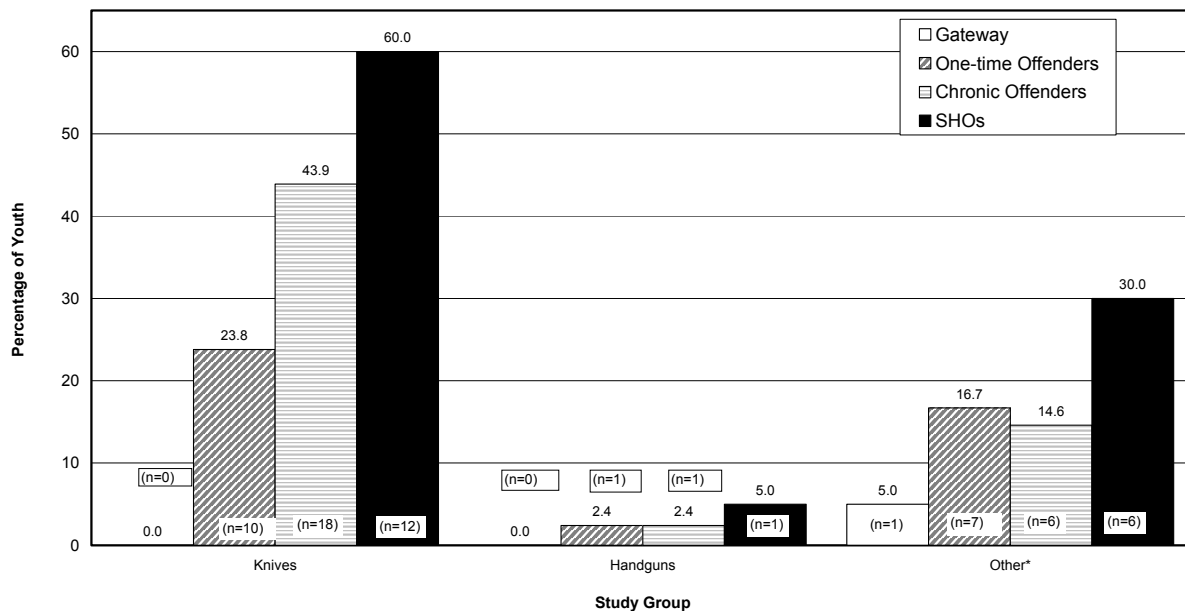
## School Experiences

All respondents were asked if they had ever been bullied at school. As shown in Table 3.7, One-time offenders were most likely to report that they had been bullied (57.1%), followed by the Gateway clients (45%). Chronic offenders (39%) and SHOs (30%) were less likely to state that they had been bullied.

Over one-half of the youth in each group indicated that they had been in fights at school. The proportion of youth who said that they had been in fights ranged from 57.9% of Gateway clients to 100% of SHOs.

When asked if they had ever taken a weapon to school, responses differed substantially for the different study groups. Only 5% of Gateway clients reported that they had taken a weapon to school, compared to 35.7% of One-time offenders, 48.8% of Chronic offenders, and 75% of SHOs. As indicated in Figure 3.5, the type of weapon most likely to be taken to school was a knife, followed by other types of weapons such as a club, imitation, or homemade weapon.

Figure 3.5  
Types of Weapons Taken to School, by Study Group



Source of data: Youth Offender Interview.

Total N for Gateway = 20; Total N for One-time Offenders = 42; Total N for Chronic Offenders = 41; Total N for SHOs = 20.

\* Other weapons include: club/bat/baton; sword/machete; imitation; homemade; pellet/BB guns; letter openers.

Substantially lower proportions of youth in each group responded affirmatively when asked if they had ever used a weapon at school. Of the youth who had taken a weapon to school, no Gateway clients had ever used the weapon. Less than one-quarter of One-time offenders, Chronic offenders and SHOs reported that they had used a weapon at school.

### 3.1.4 Social Life

#### Friendships

Respondents were asked about their friendships, and the findings are presented in Table 3.8. When asked where they met most of their friends, the most common response provided by Gateway clients was at school (90%), followed by playing sports (25%) and through other friends (20%). One-time offenders were also most likely to indicate that they had met most of their friends at school (78.6%), followed by in their neighbourhood (14.3%). Chronic offenders reported meeting most of their friends at school (61%), on the street (19.5%), and through other means such as at a commuter train or bus stop or at the mall (17.1%). While the most common place that SHOs reported meeting their friends was also at school (45%), almost one-third (30%) indicated that they had met most of their friends in custody.

When asked about the age of their closest friends, few respondents in any of the four study groups indicated that their friends were mostly younger than themselves. The most common response for the Gateway clients (75%), the One-time offenders (53.7%), and the Chronic offenders (60%) was that their friends were about the same age as the respondent. The most common response provided by the SHOs was that their friends were mostly older (45%), followed by the same age (40%).

The majority of Gateway clients (85%) and the One-time offenders (52.4%) indicated that their parents approve of their friends. Substantially higher proportions of the Chronic offenders and the SHOs indicated that their parents do not approve of their friends (41% and 40%, respectively).

**Table 3.8**  
**Characteristics of Respondents' Friendships, by Study Group**

	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Where Friends Were Met<sup>1</sup></b>								
At school	18	90.0	33	78.6	25	61.0	9	45.0
On the street	1	5.0	2	4.8	8	19.5	4	20.0
At parties	1	5.0	4	9.5	4	9.8	0	0.0
In the neighbourhood	1	5.0	6	14.3	5	12.2	4	20.0
At work	0	0.0	3	7.1	2	4.9	1	5.0
Through other friends	4	20.0	5	11.9	4	9.8	4	20.0
Internet	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	0	0.0
Through gangs	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	0	0.0
In custody	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	9.8	6	30.0
Playing sports	5	25.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	2	10.0
Other <sup>2</sup>	3	15.0	5	11.9	7	17.1	4	20.0
<b>Age of Closest Friends</b>								
Mostly younger	0	0.0	1	2.4	2	5.0	0	0.0
Same age	15	75.0	22	53.7	24	60.0	8	40.0
Mostly older	1	5.0	11	26.8	9	22.5	9	45.0
Vary in age	4	20.0	7	17.1	5	12.5	3	15.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	41	100.0	40	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Parents Approve of Friends</b>								
Yes	17	85.0	22	52.4	12	30.8	5	25.0
No	3	15.0	10	23.8	16	41.0	8	40.0
Some yes, some no	0	0.0	5	11.9	7	17.9	5	25.0
Parents don't know friends	0	0.0	5	11.9	2	5.1	0	0.0
Don't know	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	5.1	2	10.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	39	100.0	20	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> Multiple response data.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of other include: train station/bus stop, mall, church/mosque.

## Leisure Activities

Table 3.9 presents the results of several questions regarding the respondents' leisure time activities. When asked how frequently they engage in leisure activities with their parents, Gateway clients reported that this happens with the greatest frequency, with 75% indicating that they engage in activities with their parents either several times per week or once per week. Approximately one-half of the One-time offenders (47.5%), the Chronic offenders (51.4%), and the SHOs (52.6%) stated that they never engage in leisure activities with their parents.

**Table 3.9**  
**Characteristics of Respondents' Leisure Activities, by Study Group**

	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Frequency of Leisure Activities with Parents</b>								
Several times per week	4	25.0	4	10.0	4	10.8	3	15.8
Once per week	8	50.0	8	20.0	9	24.3	2	10.5
Once every few weeks	0	0.0	2	5.0	3	8.1	2	10.5
Once per month	1	6.3	2	5.0	1	2.7	1	5.3
<Once per month	1	6.3	5	12.5	1	2.7	1	5.3
Never	2	12.5	19	47.5	19	51.4	10	52.6
<b>Total</b>	16	100.0	40	100.0	37	100.0	19	100.0
<b>Involved in Organized Activities after School</b>								
Yes	15	75.0	13	31.0	9	22.0	2	10.0
No	5	25.0	29	69.0	32	78.0	18	90.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Involved in Adult-coached Sports</b>								
Yes	11	55.0	9	21.4	4	9.8	0	0.0
No	9	45.0	33	78.6	37	90.2	20	100.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Involved in Organized Non-sport Activities</b>								
Yes	7	35.0	3	7.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
No	13	65.0	39	92.9	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Involved in Clubs/Groups with Adult Leadership</b>								
Yes	3	15.0	5	11.9	2	4.9	0	0.0
No	17	85.0	37	88.1	39	95.1	20	100.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

When asked if they engage in organized activities after school, the responses varied substantially across the study groups. Only 10% of the SHOs indicated that they engage in organized activities after school, compared to 22% of Chronic offenders, 31% of One-time offenders, and 75% of Gateway clients. Similarly, no SHOs reported that they are involved in adult-coached sports, while 9.8% of Chronic offenders, 21.4% of One-time offenders, and 55% of Gateway clients said that they participate in these activities.

Overall, fewer respondents stated that they engage in organized non-sport activities. No SHOs or Chronic offenders reported engaging in these activities, and only 7.1% of One-time offenders reported doing so. A total of 35% of Gateway clients stated that they participate in organized non-sport activities. Few respondents in any group indicated that they participate in clubs or groups with adult leadership: responses varied from 0% for the SHOs to 15% for the Gateway clients.

### 3.1.5 Community Characteristics

#### Community Safety

Respondents were asked several questions regarding their feelings of safety in their communities, including during their use of Calgary Transit. Table 3.10 presents data related to feelings of safety in the community. When asked if they felt safe when alone in their homes at night, almost all respondents in each group indicated that they felt safe, and ranged from 90% of the Gateway clients to 94.4% of the SHOs. Only three One-time offenders and one SHO indicated that they did not feel safe when alone at home at night.

**Table 3.10**  
**Respondents' Feeling of Safety in Their Community, by Study Group**

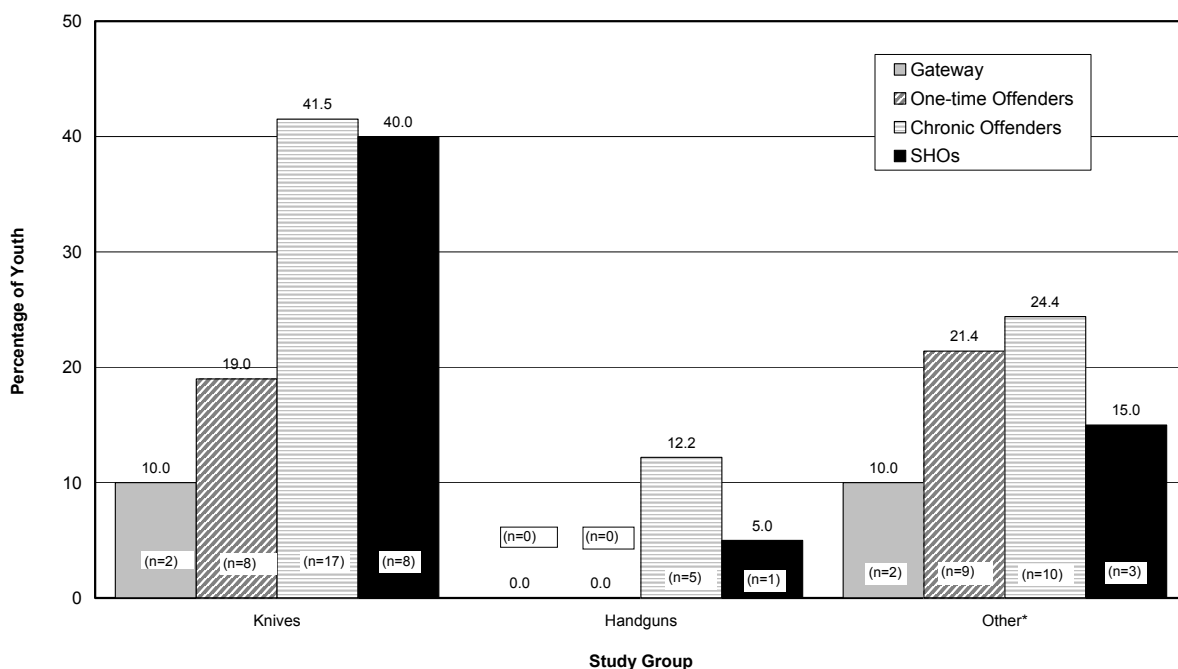
	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Feelings of Safety Alone at Home at Night</b>								
Safe	18	90.0	38	90.5	38	92.7	17	94.4
Generally safe	2	10.0	1	2.4	3	7.3	0	0.0
Unsafe	0	0.0	3	7.1	0	0.0	1	5.6
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	18	100.0
<b>Feelings of Safety in Community after Dark</b>								
Safe	16	80.0	30	71.4	35	85.4	19	95.0
Generally safe	1	5.0	6	14.3	1	2.4	1	5.0
Unsafe	3	15.0	6	14.3	5	12.2	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Ever Carried Weapon in Community</b>								
Yes	3	15.0	13	31.0	23	56.1	11	55.0
No	17	85.0	29	69.0	18	43.9	9	45.0
<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>If Ever Carried Weapon in Community, Ever Used It</b>								
Yes	1	33.3	6	46.2	13	58.5	6	60.0
No	2	66.7	7	53.8	10	43.5	4	40.0
<b>Total</b>	3	100.0	13	100.0	23	100.0	10	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

Respondents' feelings of safety in their community were also quite high, and ranged from 71.4% of the One-time offenders to 95% of the SHOs. None of the SHOs stated that they feel unsafe in their community and, for the other three groups, feeling unsafe in their community ranged from 12.2% of the Chronic offenders to 15% of the Gateway clients.

When asked if they had ever carried a weapon in their community, the majority of Gateway clients (85%) and One-time offenders (69%) stated that they had never carried a weapon. Conversely, the majority of Chronic offenders (56.1%) and SHOs (55%) indicated that they had carried a weapon in their community. Figure 3.6 presents the type of weapons that youth reported carrying in their community. Similar to the findings with respect to carrying weapons at school, the most common weapon reported was knives, followed by other weapons which include such objects as clubs, homemade weapons, and pellet/BB guns. Five respondents in the Chronic offender group and one SHO reported that they had carried a handgun in their community.

**Figure 3.6**  
Types of Weapons Carried in Community, by Study Group



Source of data: Youth Offender Interview.

Total N for Gateway = 20; Total N for One-time Offenders = 42; Total N for Chronic Offenders = 41; Total N for SHOs = 20.

\* Other weapons include: club/bat/baton; sword/machete; homemade; pepper spray; pellet/BB guns; metal knuckles.

When youth who stated that they had carried a weapon in their community were asked if they had ever used it, responses ranged from a low of 33.3% for the Gateway clients to a high of 60% for the SHOs.

### Calgary Transit Experiences

Youth were asked several questions regarding their use of and feelings of safety while using Calgary Transit (buses and light rail transit (LRT)), and their responses are presented in Table 3.11. The majority of respondents in each group indicated that they use the bus every day, and ranged from 60% of Gateway clients to 68.3% of Chronic offenders. When asked how safe they feel waiting for or riding the bus alone after dark, the majority of youth in the One-time offender (65.6%), Chronic offender (69.4%), and SHO (82.4%) groups stated that they feel safe. A smaller proportion of the Gateway

clients (41.2%) reported that they feel safe. Fewer than one-fifth of the respondents in each group reported feeling unsafe, and ranged from 0% for the SHOs to 18.8% of the One-time offenders.

**Table 3.11**  
**Characteristics of Respondents' Public Transit Use, by Study Group**

	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Number of Times Ride Bus Per Week</b>								
None	3	15.0	9	21.4	6	14.6	4	20.0
<1	1	5.0	2	4.8	2	4.9	1	5.0
1	2	10.0	2	4.8	1	2.4	0	0.0
A few times	2	10.0	3	7.1	4	9.8	2	10.0
Daily	12	60.0	26	61.9	28	68.3	13	65.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Feelings of Safety Waiting for or Riding Bus Alone After Dark</b>								
Safe	7	41.2	21	65.6	25	69.4	14	82.4
Generally safe	7	41.2	5	15.6	7	19.4	3	17.6
Unsafe	3	17.6	6	18.8	4	11.1	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Number of Times Ride LRT Per Week</b>								
None	3	15.0	4	9.5	5	12.5	2	10.0
<1	2	10.0	9	21.4	7	17.5	4	20.0
1	4	20.0	3	7.1	1	2.5	2	10.0
A few times	5	25.0	7	16.7	6	15.0	2	10.0
Daily	6	30.0	19	45.2	21	52.5	10	50.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Feelings of Safety Waiting for or Riding LRT Alone After Dark</b>								
Safe	7	41.2	17	45.9	26	72.2	9	50.0
Generally safe	8	47.1	14	37.8	5	13.9	8	44.4
Unsafe	2	11.8	6	16.2	5	13.9	1	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

A smaller proportion of youth in each study group reported that they ride the LRT every day, ranging from 30% of the Gateway clients to 52.5% of the Chronic offenders. Most respondents in the Chronic offender group (72.2%) and half the respondents in the SHO group (50%) indicated that they feel safe while waiting for or riding the LRT alone after dark. A slightly smaller proportion of the Gateway clients (41.2%) and One-time offenders (45.9%) reported feeling safe. Relatively few individuals reporting feeling unsafe while using the LRT, ranging from 5.6% of the SHOs to 16.2% of the One-time offenders.



### 3.1.6 Self-reported Delinquency

Respondents were asked how old they were when they first had contact with the police because of something they did. The results for all four study groups were very similar. Chronic offenders (11.4; range 7-16) and Gateway clients (11.4; range 6-15) had the lowest mean ages followed by SHOs (11.6; range 6-16), and One-time offenders (12.3; range 6-16). When asked if they had engaged in any delinquent behaviour before they were caught, half of the Gateway clients (50%), about two-thirds of the Chronic offenders (63.4%) and One-time offenders (66.7%), and three-quarters of the SHOs (75%) said yes.

### Alcohol and Drug Use

Youth were asked a variety of questions about their alcohol and drug use, and the results are presented in Table 3.12. When asked if they had ever had 5 or more drinks of alcohol on one occasion, three-quarters (75%) of the Gateway clients, 88.1% of the One-time offenders, and all of the Chronic offenders and SHOs responded yes. When further asked if they had done this in the past year, the vast majority of respondents said yes (ranging from 70% of the SHOs to 94.6% of the One-time offenders).

Respondents also reported high levels of illegal drug use. An initial screening question asked respondents if they had ever used illegal drugs. Gateway clients reported the lowest levels of illegal drug use at 60%, followed by the One-time offenders (83.3%). All of the Chronic offenders and SHOs reported ever having used illegal drugs. Respondents who reported that they had used illegal drugs were then asked further questions regarding specific drugs. The most common illegal drug used by all study groups was marijuana. All of the respondents in each of the four groups reported that they had used marijuana at least once, and almost all reported having used marijuana in the past year (ranging from 80% of the SHOs to 100% of the Gateway clients).

**Table 3.12**  
**Respondents' Alcohol and Drug Use, by Study Group**

			Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Had 5 or More Drinks on One Occasion</b>										
Ever	Yes		15	75.0	37	88.1	41	100.0	20	100.0
	No		5	25.0	5	11.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
	<b>Total</b>		20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year <sup>1</sup>	Yes		14	93.3	35	94.6	35	85.4	14	70.0
	No		1	6.7	2	5.4	6	14.6	6	30.0
	<b>Total</b>		15	100.0	37	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Used Prescription Drugs Not Yours</b>										
Ever	Yes		2	10.0	13	31.0	16	39.0	11	55.0
	No		18	90.0	29	69.0	25	61.0	9	45.0
	<b>Total</b>		20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes		2	100.0	5	41.7	5	31.3	3	30.0
	No		0	0.0	7	58.3	11	68.8	7	70.0
	<b>Total</b>		2	100.0	12	100.0	16	100.0	10	100.0
<b>Ever Used Illegal Drugs</b>										
	Yes		12	60.0	35	83.3	41	100.0	20	100.0
	No		8	40.0	7	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
	<b>Total</b>		20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>If So,<sup>2</sup></b>										
<b>Used Marijuana</b>										
Ever	Yes		12	100.0	35	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
	No		0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	<b>Total</b>		12	100.0	35	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes		12	100.0	31	91.2	35	85.4	16	80.0
	No		0	0.0	3	8.8	6	14.6	4	20.0
	<b>Total</b>		12	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Used Steroids</b>										
Ever	Yes		0	0.0	1	2.9	2	4.9	0	0.0
	No		12	100.0	33	97.1	39	95.1	20	100.0
	<b>Total</b>		12	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes		--	--	0	0.0	1	50.0	--	--
	No		--	--	1	100.0	1	50.0	--	--
	<b>Total</b>		--	--	1	100.0	2	100.0	--	--
<b>Used Ecstasy</b>										
Ever	Yes		5	41.7	26	76.5	36	87.8	18	90.0
	No		7	58.3	8	23.5	5	12.2	2	10.0
	<b>Total</b>		12	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes		4	80.0	15	57.7	25	69.4	9	50.0
	No		1	20.0	11	42.3	11	30.6	9	50.0
	<b>Total</b>		5	100.0	26	100.0	36	100.0	18	100.0

Cont'd

Table 3.12 (cont'd)

		Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Used Crystal Methamphetamine</b>									
Ever	Yes	2	16.7	5	14.7	6	14.6	6	30.0
	No	10	83.3	29	85.3	35	85.4	14	70.0
	<b>Total</b>	12	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes	2	100.0	1	20.0	2	33.3	0	0.0
	No	0	0.0	4	80.0	4	66.7	6	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	2	100.0	5	100.0	6	100.0	6	100.0
<b>Used Cocaine</b>									
Ever	Yes	3	25.0	18	52.9	31	75.6	13	65.0
	No	9	75.0	16	47.1	10	24.4	7	35.0
	<b>Total</b>	12	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes	3	100.0	10	55.6	21	67.7	7	53.8
	No	0	0.0	8	44.4	10	32.3	6	46.2
	<b>Total</b>	3	100.0	18	100.0	31	100.0	13	100.0
<b>Used Crack</b>									
Ever	Yes	1	8.3	6	17.6	17	41.5	10	50.0
	No	11	91.7	28	82.4	24	58.8	10	50.0
	<b>Total</b>	12	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes	1	100.0	5	83.3	11	64.7	5	50.0
	No	0	0.0	1	16.7	6	35.3	5	50.0
	<b>Total</b>	1	100.0	6	100.0	17	100.0	10	100.0
<b>Used Mushrooms</b>									
Ever	Yes	6	50.0	25	73.5	35	85.4	16	80.0
	No	6	50.0	9	26.5	6	14.6	4	20.0
	<b>Total</b>	12	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes	6	100.0	15	62.5	19	54.3	5	33.3
	No	0	0.0	9	37.5	16	45.7	10	66.7
	<b>Total</b>	6	100.0	24	100.0	35	100.0	15	100.0
<b>Used Other Illegal Drugs<sup>3</sup></b>									
Ever	Yes	4	33.3	10	29.4	16	39.0	4	20.0
	No	8	66.7	24	70.6	25	61.0	16	80.0
	<b>Total</b>	12	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes	1	25.0	6	60.0	7	43.8	2	50.0
	No	3	75.0	4	40.0	9	56.3	2	50.0
	<b>Total</b>	4	100.0	10	100.0	16	100.0	4	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> Past year percentages are based on the number of youth who reported they ever engaged in the activity.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents who reported ever using illegal drugs were asked questions regarding specific drug use.

<sup>3</sup> Other illegal drugs include acid, speed, special k, heroin, salvia, and angel dust/pcp.

In addition to marijuana, many respondents who reported illegal drug use had also used other drugs, most notably ecstasy, “magic mushrooms” and cocaine. Most of the SHOs (90%) and Chronic offenders (87.8%), three-quarters (76.5%) of the One-time offenders, and 41.7% of the Gateway clients reported ever having used ecstasy. Of these youth, at least half (SHOs and One-time offenders) and over two-thirds (Chronic offenders and Gateway clients) reported having used ecstasy in the past year. The majority of respondents also reported ever having used mushrooms (ranging from 50% of Gateway clients to 85.4% of Chronic offenders). The pattern of past year use of this drug was different, however. All of the Gateway clients reported having used mushrooms in the past year, compared to two-thirds of the One-time offenders (62.5%), one-half of the Chronic offenders (54.3%), and one-third of the SHOs (33.3%). The proportions of respondents reporting ever having used cocaine were also high, particularly for the repeat offenders. One-quarter of the Gateway clients (25%) had used cocaine, compared to 52.9% of the One-time offenders, 65% of the SHOs, and 75.6% of the Chronic offenders. Past-year use of cocaine by these respondents was also high. Over half of the SHOs (53.8%) and One-time offenders (55.6%), over two-thirds of the Chronic offenders (67.7%), and all of the Gateway clients reported having used cocaine in the past year.

Respondents also reported using crack and crystal methamphetamine, although smaller proportions of youth used these drugs. Only 8.3% of Gateway clients and 17.6% of One-time offenders reported ever having used crack. Use of this drug was higher, however, for the repeat offenders; 41.5% of Chronic offenders and 50% of SHOs reported ever having used crack. Past year use of crack was high. Half of the SHOs (50%), almost two-thirds of Chronic offenders (64.7%), four-fifths of One-time offenders (83.3%), and all of the Gateway clients reported having used crack in the past year. A very small number of respondents reported ever having used steroids; only two Chronic offenders and one One-time offender reported using steroids.

Youth were asked if they used other illegal drugs (that weren’t already specifically mentioned), and about one- to two-fifths reported using other illegal drugs (ranging from 20% of the SHOs to 39% of the Chronic offenders). Respondents were also asked if they used prescription drugs that weren’t prescribed for them. Results varied, with only 10% of the Gateway clients reporting using someone else’s prescription drugs, compared to 55% of the SHOs.

In an attempt to find out how accessible illegal drugs are to these youth, respondents were asked if they knew where to find drugs if they wanted to use them. Table 3.13 indicates that the accessibility of drugs generally increases with the extent of criminal involvement of each study group. Over half of the Gateway clients (55%) knew where to find drugs, compared to three-quarters of the One-time offenders (73.8%), 85% of the SHOs, and 95.1% of the Chronic offenders.

**Table 3.13  
Respondents' Other Drug Activities, by Study Group**

		Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Know Where to Find Drugs</b>									
	Yes	11	55.0	31	73.8	39	95.1	17	85.0
	No	9	45.0	11	26.2	2	4.9	3	15.0
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Bought Illegal Drugs</b>									
Ever	Yes	6	30.0	30	71.4	38	92.7	18	90.0
	No	14	70.0	12	28.6	3	7.3	2	10.0
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year <sup>1</sup>	Yes	5	83.3	24	80.0	30	78.9	12	66.7
	No	1	16.7	6	20.0	8	21.1	6	33.3
	<b>Total</b>	6	100.0	30	100.0	38	100.0	18	100.0
<b>Sold Illegal Drugs</b>									
Ever	Yes	7	35.0	20	47.6	28	68.3	14	70.0
	No	13	65.0	22	52.4	13	31.7	6	30.0
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes	6	100.0	10	50.0	16	57.1	9	64.3
	No	0	0.0	10	50.0	12	42.9	5	35.7
	<b>Total</b>	6	100.0	20	100.0	28	100.0	14	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> Past year percentages are based on the number of youth who reported they ever engaged in the activity.

Table 3.13 also presents the results of questions regarding respondents' drug dealing activities. Respondents were asked if they had ever bought illegal drugs. A larger proportion of the repeat offenders admitted having bought illegal drugs in the past (92.7% of Chronic offenders and 90% of SHOs compared to 71.4% of One-time offenders and 30% of Gateway clients). When asked if they had bought illegal drugs in the past year, over two-thirds of the respondents in all the study groups reported that they had. Respondents were then asked if they had ever sold illegal drugs. One-third of the Gateway clients (35%), almost one-half of the One-time offenders (47.6%), and over two-thirds of the Chronic offenders (68.3%) and SHOs (70%) reported that they had sold illegal drugs. When asked if they had done this in the past year, the majority of respondents who admitted selling drugs said that they had done so (ranging from 50% of the One-time offenders to 100% of the Gateway clients).

### Public Transit Delinquency

Because of concerns regarding the safety of public transit, the interview schedule included a number of questions on respondents' public transit delinquency (see Table 3.14). Youth were first asked if they had ever ridden Calgary Transit without having a valid ticket. Over two-thirds of the respondents in all four study groups reported having done this (65% of Gateway clients, 81% of One-time offenders, 82.9% of Chronic offenders, and 90% of SHOs). When asked if they had done this in the past year, over half said that they had (53.8% of Gateway clients, 55.6% of SHOs, 64.7% of Chronic offenders, and 79.4% of One-time offenders).

**Table 3.14  
Respondents' Public Transit Delinquency, by Study Group**

			Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Ridden Calgary Transit Without Valid Ticket</b>										
Ever	Yes		13	65.0	34	81.0	34	82.9	18	90.0
	No		7	35.0	8	19.0	7	17.1	2	10.0
	<b>Total</b>		20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year <sup>1</sup>	Yes		7	53.8	27	79.4	22	64.7	10	55.6
	No		6	46.2	7	20.6	12	35.3	8	44.4
	<b>Total</b>		13	100.0	34	100.0	34	100.0	18	100.0
<b>Damaged/Vandalized/Tagged Calgary Transit Property</b>										
Ever	Yes		0	0.0	15	35.7	9	22.0	7	35.0
	No		20	100.0	27	64.3	32	78.0	13	65.0
	<b>Total</b>		20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes		--	--	5	33.3	7	77.8	4	57.1
	No		--	--	10	66.7	2	22.2	3	42.9
	<b>Total</b>		--	--	15	100.0	9	100.0	7	100.0
<b>Harassed Anyone on Calgary Transit (or at the Station)<sup>2</sup></b>										
Ever	Yes		3	25.0	7	19.4	12	37.5	12	70.6
	No		9	75.0	29	80.6	20	62.5	5	29.4
	<b>Total</b>		12	100.0	36	100.0	32	100.0	17	100.0
Past Year	Yes		1	50.0	4	57.1	8	72.7	3	27.3
	No		1	50.0	3	42.9	3	27.3	8	72.7
	<b>Total</b>		2	100.0	7	100.0	11	100.0	11	100.0
<b>Assaulted Anyone on Calgary Transit Property<sup>3</sup></b>										
Ever	Yes		1	20.0	5	15.2	17	45.9	14	70.0
	No		4	80.0	28	84.8	20	54.1	6	30.0
	<b>Total</b>		5	100.0	33	100.0	37	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes		1	100.0	4	80.0	10	58.8	3	21.4
	No		0	0.0	1	20.0	7	41.2	11	78.6
	<b>Total</b>		1	100.0	5	100.0	17	100.0	14	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> Past year percentages are based on the number of youth who reported they ever engaged in the activity.

<sup>2</sup> This question is based on the total number of youth who reported ever harassing someone (see Table 3.16).

<sup>3</sup> This question is based on the total number of youth who reported ever assaulting someone (see Table 3.16).

Respondents were asked if they had ever damaged/vandalized/tagged Calgary Transit property. None of the Gateway clients reported doing this activity. Less than one-quarter of the Chronic offenders (22%) and just over one-third of SHOs (35%) and One-time offenders (35.7%) reported damaging Calgary Transit property in some way. When asked if they had done it in the past year, one-third of the One-time offenders (33.3%), over one-half of the SHOs (57.1%), and over three-quarters of the Chronic offenders (77.8%) said they had.

Respondents were asked if they had ever harassed anyone on Calgary Transit (or at the station). As shown in Table 3.14, the results differed by study group. Smaller proportions of Gateway clients (25%) and One-time offenders (19.4%) reported ever doing this, compared to the Chronic offenders (37.5%) and the SHOs (70.6%). When asked if they had done this in the past year, just over one-quarter of the SHOs (27.3%) said they had, compared to over half of the Gateway clients (50%) and One-time offenders (57.1%), and almost three-quarters of the Chronic offenders (72.7%).

Lastly, respondents who had reported ever assaulting or hurting someone were asked if they had ever assaulted anyone on Calgary Transit property (see Table 3.14). Results ranged from 15.2% of the One-time offenders and 20% of the Gateway clients to 45.9% of the Chronic offenders and 70% of the SHOs. When asked if they had done this in the past year, less than one-quarter of the SHOs said they had (21.4%), but the majority of youth in the other study groups said they had assaulted someone on Calgary Transit property in the past year.

### Property Crimes

The interview schedule included a series of questions on respondents' involvement in property crimes, both ever and in the past year. The results are presented in Table 3.15. Overall, the level of respondents' involvement in property crimes increased with the extent of criminal involvement of the study group.

Youth were asked if they had ever deliberately damaged or destroyed someone else's property. Over one-third of the Gateway clients (35%), two-thirds of the One-time offenders (66.7%), and three-quarters of the Chronic offenders (75.6%) and SHOs (75%) said that they had. When asked if they had done this in the past year, the reverse pattern was found of those who reported that they had ever engaged in this type of behaviour, one-quarter of the SHOs (26.7%), 41.4% of the Chronic offenders, 48.1% of the One-time offenders, and 85.7% of the Gateway clients reported having deliberately damaged or destroyed someone else's property in the past year.

Respondents were asked if they had ever broken into a house. Only one Gateway client (5%) reported doing this activity. Results were higher for One-time offenders (31%), Chronic offenders (61%) and SHOs (80%), but most of the respondents had not done this activity in the past year.

Youth were asked if they had ever stolen anything from a place or a person and, if yes, were asked further questions regarding what they had stolen (see Table 3.15). The vast majority of youth in the four study groups reported having stolen something in the past (81% of One-time offenders, 85% of Gateway clients, 95% of SHOs, and 100% of Chronic offenders). Respondents were then asked if they had stolen something worth less than \$50. Again, of those who had ever stolen something, most respondents had done this activity (ranging from 63.4% of the Chronic offenders to 88.2% of the Gateway clients). Approximately one-half to two-thirds of respondents in all study groups also reported stealing something worth less than \$50 in the past year.

**Table 3.15  
Respondents' Involvement in Property Crimes, by Study Group**

		Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Damaged or Destroyed Others' Property</b>									
Ever	Yes	7	35.0	28	66.7	31	75.6	15	75.0
	No	13	65.0	14	33.3	10	24.4	5	25.0
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year <sup>1</sup>	Yes	6	85.7	13	48.1	12	41.4	4	26.7
	No	1	14.3	14	51.9	17	58.6	11	73.3
	<b>Total</b>	7	100.0	27	100.0	29	100.0	15	100.0
<b>Broken into a House</b>									
Ever	Yes	1	5.0	13	31.0	25	61.0	16	80.0
	No	19	95.0	29	69.0	16	39.0	4	20.0
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes	0	0.0	5	41.7	6	24.0	3	20.0
	No	1	100.0	7	58.3	19	76.0	12	80.0
	<b>Total</b>	1	100.0	12	100.0	25	100.0	15	100.0
<b>Stolen Anything<sup>2</sup></b>									
Ever	Yes	17	85.0	34	81.0	41	100.0	19	95.0
	No	3	15.0	8	19.0	0	0.0	1	5.0
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
<b>If So,</b>									
<b>Stolen Something Worth Less Than \$50</b>									
Ever	Yes	15	88.2	27	79.4	26	63.4	15	83.3
	No	2	11.8	7	20.6	15	36.6	3	16.7
	<b>Total</b>	17	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	18	100.0
Past Year	Yes	9	60.0	12	44.4	12	46.2	10	66.7
	No	6	40.0	15	55.6	14	53.8	5	33.3
	<b>Total</b>	15	100.0	27	100.0	26	100.0	15	100.0
<b>Stolen Something Worth More Than \$50</b>									
Ever	Yes	8	47.1	20	58.8	37	90.2	15	83.3
	No	9	52.9	14	41.2	4	9.8	3	16.7
	<b>Total</b>	17	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	18	100.0
Past Year	Yes	7	87.5	6	30.0	22	59.5	6	40.0
	No	1	12.5	14	70.0	15	40.5	9	60.0
	<b>Total</b>	8	100.0	20	100.0	37	100.0	15	100.0
<b>Stolen a Car or Motorcycle</b>									
Ever	Yes	3	18.8	11	32.4	29	70.7	14	77.8
	No	13	81.3	23	67.6	12	29.3	4	22.2
	<b>Total</b>	16	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	18	100.0
Past Year	Yes	3	100.0	3	27.3	16	55.2	8	57.1
	No	0	0.0	8	72.7	13	44.8	6	42.9
	<b>Total</b>	3	100.0	11	100.0	29	100.0	14	100.0
<b>Stolen Something with Group of Friends</b>									
Ever	Yes	9	56.3	23	67.6	30	73.2	16	88.2
	No	7	43.8	11	32.4	11	26.8	2	11.1
	<b>Total</b>	16	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	18	100.0
Past Year	Yes	6	66.7	9	39.1	12	41.4	6	37.5
	No	3	33.3	14	60.9	17	58.6	10	62.5
	<b>Total</b>	9	100.0	23	100.0	29	100.0	16	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> Past year percentages are based on the number of youth who reported they ever engaged in the activity.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents who reported ever stealing anything were asked additional questions about stealing.



When asked if they had ever stolen something worth \$50 or more, the results differed by study group. A larger proportion of the repeat offenders (90.2% of the Chronic offenders and 83.3% of the SHOs) reported doing this activity than the One-time offenders (58.8%) or Gateway clients (47.1%). When asked if they had stolen something worth \$50 or more in the past year, the majority of Gateway clients (87.5%) and Chronic offenders (59.5%) said yes.

A similar pattern of results was obtained when respondents were asked if they had ever stolen a car or motorcycle. The majority of repeat offenders said yes (77.8% of SHOs and 70.7% of Chronic offenders), while only a minority of the other two study groups said yes (18.8% of Gateway clients and 32.4% of One-time offenders). All of the Gateway clients who said they had stolen a car or motorcycle said they did this activity in the past year, compared to just over half of the SHOs (57.1%) and Chronic offenders (55.2%), and one-quarter of the One-time offenders (27.3%).

The final question in the interview schedule regarding property crimes asked respondents if they had ever stolen something with a group of friends. The majority of respondents said they had done this activity, and the proportion increased with the study groups' level of criminal involvement (56.3% of Gateway clients, 67.6% of One-time offenders, 73.2% of Chronic offenders, and 88.2% of SHOs). Interestingly, more Gateway clients said they had stolen something with a group of friends in the past year (66.7%) than the other study groups (41.4% of Chronic offenders, 39.1% of One-time offenders, and 37.5% of SHOs).

### Crimes Against the Person

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their involvement in crimes against other people, both ever and in the past year (see Table 3.16). The first question asked if respondents had ever taken or tried to take something from someone by using force or threat of force. Almost three-quarters of the SHOs (72.2%) reported doing this, compared to less than two-thirds of the Chronic offenders (61%), one-third of the One-time offenders (32.4%), and none of the Gateway clients. When those who had ever done this were asked if they had done this in the past year, the majority of the One-time offenders (63.6%) and Chronic offenders (56%) said yes, compared to less than one-quarter of the SHOs (23.1%).

The next question asked youth if they had ever harassed, threatened or bullied someone. The vast majority of the One-time offenders (85.7%), SHOs (85%), and Chronic offenders (80.5%) said they had, compared to three-fifths of the Gateway clients (60%). The majority of respondents in all study groups also reported that they had done this activity in the past year. Respondents who said they had harassed, threatened or bullied someone were then asked if they had ever threatened someone with a weapon, including having a weapon on them while intimidating, assaulting, or threatening someone. The proportion of respondents who said they had done this activity increased with the study groups' level of criminal involvement. Only one Gateway client (8.3%) threatened someone with a weapon, compared to 47.2% of One-time offenders, 60.6% of Chronic offenders, and 82.4% of SHOs. Over half of these respondents also reported doing this activity in the past year.

Respondents were asked if they had ever assaulted or hurt someone (i.e., slapped, punched, kicked, struck with an object, etc.). One-quarter of the Gateway clients (25%) said they had done this, compared to the vast majority of respondents in the other study groups (81% of One-time offenders, 90.2% of Chronic offenders, and 100% of the SHOs). The large majority of these respondents also reported assaulting or hurting someone in the past year (ranging from 60.6% of One-time offenders to 81.1% of Chronic offenders). The respondents who said they had assaulted or hurt someone were then asked if they had ever assaulted or hurt someone with a weapon. The results differed widely by study group. None of the Gateway clients had done this, compared to almost half of the One-time offenders (48.5%), 59.5% of the Chronic offenders, and almost all the SHOs (90%). Approximately half of these respondents reported that they had assaulted or hurt someone with a weapon in the past year.

**Table 3.16**  
**Respondents' Involvement in Person Crimes, by Study Group**

		Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Taken (or Tried) Something by Force or Threat of Force</b>									
Ever	Yes	0	0.0	11	32.4	25	61.0	13	72.2
	No	16	100.0	23	67.6	16	39.0	5	27.8
<b>Total</b>		16	100.0	34	100.0	41	100.0	18	100.0
Past Year	Yes	--	--	7	63.6	14	56.0	3	23.1
	No	--	--	4	36.4	11	44.0	10	76.9
<b>Total</b>		--	--	11	100.0	25	100.0	13	100.0
<b>Harassed, Threatened or Bullied Someone<sup>2</sup></b>									
Ever	Yes	12	60.0	36	85.7	33	80.5	17	85.0
	No	8	40.0	6	14.3	8	19.5	3	15.0
<b>Total</b>		20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes	11	100.0	24	68.6	23	71.9	9	60.0
	No	0	0.0	11	31.4	9	28.1	6	40.0
<b>Total</b>		11	100.0	35	100.0	32	100.0	15	100.0
<b>If So, Threatened Someone with Weapon</b>									
Ever	Yes	1	8.3	17	47.2	20	60.6	14	82.4
	No	11	91.7	19	52.8	13	39.4	3	17.6
<b>Total</b>		12	100.0	36	100.0	33	100.0	17	100.0
Past Year	Yes	1	100.0	10	58.8	11	55.0	7	53.8
	No	0	0.0	7	41.2	9	45.0	6	46.2
<b>Total</b>		1	100.0	17	100.0	20	100.0	13	100.0
<b>Assaulted or Hurt Someone<sup>3</sup></b>									
Ever	Yes	5	25.0	34	81.0	37	90.2	20	100.0
	No	15	75.0	8	19.0	4	9.8	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>		20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes	4	80.0	20	60.6	30	81.1	13	68.4
	No	1	20.0	13	39.4	7	18.9	6	31.6
<b>Total</b>		5	100.0	33	100.0	37	100.0	19	100.0

Cont'd

Table 3.16 (cont'd)

			Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>If So,</b>										
<b>Assaulted or Hurt Someone with Weapon</b>										
Ever	Yes		0	0.0	16	48.5	22	59.5	18	90.0
	No		5	100.0	17	51.5	15	40.5	2	10.0
	<b>Total</b>		5	100.0	33	100.0	37	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes		--	--	7	46.7	11	52.4	8	47.1
	No		--	--	8	53.3	10	47.6	9	52.9
	<b>Total</b>		--	--	15	100.0	21	100.0	17	100.0
<b>Assaulted Someone with Friends</b>										
Ever	Yes		3	60.0	18	52.9	26	70.3	17	85.0
	No		2	40.0	16	47.1	11	29.7	3	15.0
	<b>Total</b>		5	100.0	34	100.0	37	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year	Yes		2	66.7	10	55.6	13	50.0	7	41.2
	No		1	33.3	8	44.4	13	50.0	10	58.8
	<b>Total</b>		3	100.0	18	100.0	26	100.0	17	100.0
<b>With Group of Friends, Fought Others</b>										
Ever	Yes		9	45.0	27	64.3	28	68.3	15	75.0
	No		11	55.0	15	35.7	13	31.7	5	25.0
	<b>Total</b>		20	100.0	42	100.0	41	100.0	20	100.0
Past Year <sup>1</sup>	Yes		5	55.6	18	66.7	11	40.7	9	60.0
	No		4	44.4	9	33.3	16	59.3	6	40.0
	<b>Total</b>		9	100.0	27	100.0	27	100.0	15	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> Past year percentages are based on the number of youth who reported they ever engaged in the activity.

<sup>2</sup> Respondents who reported ever harassing, threatening or bullying someone were asked if they had done so with a weapon.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents who reported ever assaulting or hurting someone were asked additional questions about these behaviours.

The next questions in the interview schedule were designed to explore whether violent youth were co-offending with others. Respondents who had said they had assaulted or hurt someone were asked if they had ever assaulted someone with one or more of their friends. The majority of the respondents in all four study groups said they had (52.9% of One-time offenders, 60% of Gateway clients, 70.3% of Chronic offenders, and 85% of SHOs). At least half of these respondents in the Gateway, One-time, and Chronic offender groups also reported doing this activity in the past year.

All respondents were asked if, together with a group of friends, they had ever fought with others. Almost half of the Gateway clients (45%), about two-thirds of the One-time offenders (64.3%) and Chronic offenders (68.3%), and three-quarters of the SHOs (75%) said they had. Those who had ever done this were then asked if they had done this in the past year; results ranged from 40.7% of the Chronic offenders to 66.7% of the One-time offenders.

The final question in the delinquency section of the interview schedule asked respondents if they had ever had or tried to have any kind of sexual contact, including kissing or sexual touching, with someone against their will. Only two respondents (one Chronic offender and one SHO) reported ever doing this activity, and neither of them had done it in the past year.

### 3.1.7 Knowledge of and Experience with Gangs

Several questions in the interview schedule delved into respondents' knowledge of gangs, and the results are presented in Table 3.17. For the purposes of the study, a gang was defined for respondents as a "group of three or more youth who regularly engage in criminal activity." Respondents were asked if there are (or were if they are no longer in school) gangs at their school. Just under half of most respondents in each of the study groups reported that there are (or were) gangs at their school (50% of One-time offenders, 47.5% of Chronic offenders, 45% of Gateway clients, and 36.8% of SHOs). When asked if there are gangs in their community, results differed by study group; 30% of the Gateway clients and 37.5% of the One-time offenders said yes, compared to 57.5% of the Chronic offenders and 60% of the SHOs.

**Table 3.17**  
**Respondents' Knowledge of and Experience with Gangs, by Study Group**

		Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Gangs at School</b>									
	Yes	9	45.0	20	50.0	19	47.5	7	36.8
	No	11	55.0	20	50.0	21	52.5	12	63.2
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0	19	100.0
<b>Gangs in Community</b>									
	Yes	6	30.0	15	37.5	23	57.5	12	60.0
	No	14	70.0	25	62.5	17	42.5	8	40.0
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Any Friends Belong to a Gang</b>									
	Yes	3	15.8	15	36.6	22	55.0	14	70.0
	No	16	84.2	26	63.4	18	45.0	6	30.0
	<b>Total</b>	19	100.0	41	100.0	40	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Gang Tried to Recruit Respondent</b>									
	Yes	3	15.0	14	34.1	24	60.0	13	65.0
	No	17	85.0	27	65.9	16	40.0	7	35.0
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	41	100.0	40	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Ever Been a Member of a Gang</b>									
	Yes	2	10.0	7	17.1	22	55.0	10	52.6
	No	18	90.0	34	82.9	18	45.0	9	47.4
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	41	100.0	40	100.0	19	100.0
<b>Currently a Gang Member</b>									
	Yes	1	5.0	1	2.5	9	22.5	6	30.0
	No	19	95.0	39	97.5	31	77.5	14	70.0
	<b>Total</b>	20	100.0	40	100.0	40	100.0	20	100.0
<b>Want to Exit Gang<sup>1</sup></b>									
	Yes	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	25.0	0	0.0
	No	1	100.0	0	0.0	3	15.0	4	50.0
	Maybe	0	0.0	1	20.0	1	5.0	1	12.5
	Got out	0	0.0	4	80.0	11	55.0	3	37.5
	<b>Total</b>	1	100.0	5	100.0	20	100.0	8	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> This question was asked of youth who had ever been a member of a gang, or reported currently being a gang member.

Respondents were asked if any of their friends belong to a gang, and the proportion of positive responses increased with the study groups' level of criminal involvement (15.8% of Gateway clients, 36.6% of One-time offenders, 55% of Chronic offenders, and 70% of SHOs). Very similar results were obtained when respondents were asked if a gang has ever tried to recruit them as a member (15% of Gateway clients, 34.1% of One-time offenders, 60% of Chronic offenders, and 65% of SHOs).

The next questions asked respondents about their own gang involvement. First, respondents were asked if they have ever been a member of a gang. A larger proportion of the repeat offenders said that they had been a member of a gang (55% of the Chronic offenders and 52.6% of the SHOs) compared to the other two study groups (17.1% of One-time offenders and 10% of Gateway clients). Respondents were then asked if they are currently a gang member, and the percentages of respondents who said yes in all four study groups were much lower. SHOs had the highest percentage of gang membership at 30%, followed by Chronic offenders (22.5%), Gateway clients (5%), and One-time offenders (2.5%). Finally, respondents were asked if they want to get out of the gang. Among Chronic offenders who are gang members, 25% said yes. None of the respondents in the other three study groups who are gang members expressed a wish to exit the gang.

Respondents who had ever been a member of a gang were asked a few questions about the characteristics of their gang (see Table 3.18). Most of the gangs were very large. Three-quarters (75%) of the One-time offenders' gangs had over 100 members, three-quarters (75%) of the SHOs' gangs had either over 100 members or "unknown/many" members, and over half of the Chronic offenders' gangs (53%) had over 100 members or "unknown/many." Results about the gender of gang members varied by study group. Three-quarters of the SHOs' gangs were males only, and one-quarter were both males and females. Both the One-time offenders' gangs and the Chronic offenders' gangs had larger proportions of both males and females (80% and 60% respectively). None of the gangs were characterized as females only. Lastly, respondents were asked if all the members of their gang belong to the same ethnic group. The majority responded that they were not all the same ethnicity (100% of the SHOs, 85% of the Chronic offenders, and 60% of the One-time offenders).

**Table 3.18**  
**Characteristics of Respondents' Gangs, by Study Group**

	Gateway		One-time Offenders		Chronic Offenders		SHOs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Size of Gang</b>								
<10	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	5.9	1	12.5
10-50	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	35.3	1	12.5
50-100	0	0.0	1	25.0	1	5.9	0	0.0
>100	0	0.0	3	75.0	7	41.2	3	37.5
Unknown/Many	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	11.8	3	37.5
<b>Total</b>	1	100.0	4	100.0	17	100.0	8	100.0
<b>Gender of Gang Members<sup>1</sup></b>								
Just Males	1	100.0	1	20.0	8	40.0	6	75.0
Just Females	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Both	0	0.0	4	80.0	12	60.0	2	25.0
<b>Total</b>	1	100.0	5	100.0	20	100.0	8	100.0
<b>All Gang Members Same Ethnicity<sup>1</sup></b>								
Yes	--	--	2	40.0	3	15.0	0	0.0
No	--	--	3	60.0	17	85.0	8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	--	--	5	100.0	20	100.0	8	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Youth Probation File Review.

<sup>1</sup> These questions were asked of youth who reported ever being a gang member.

## 4.0 YOUTH REOFFENDING PATTERNS

Data were obtained from the Police Information Management System (PIMS) of the Calgary Police Service on the reoffending patterns of the 123 youth interviewed for this study from the date of their interview through October 31, 2008. Data obtained from PIMS were for *chargeable incidents*, which refers to a contact between an offender and the police where there was sufficient evidence for an information to be laid, whether or not the offender was actually charged. Only substantive incidents are included in the database and therefore administration of justice offences (e.g., breaches) are excluded.

The initial interviews were conducted during the period July 12, 2006 through July 18, 2007; thus, the length of time available for youth to reoffend from the date of their interview to October 31, 2008 varied across participants in the study. In order to compensate for this, data were initially examined according to three reoffending time periods: within 12 months after the interview; within 12 to 18 months after the interview; and within 18 to 24 months after the interview. All 123 youth were in the study for a sufficient period of time to be eligible to have data in the 12 months after the interview and 12 to 18 months after the interview time intervals. A total of 89 youth had a sufficient time period following their interview to potentially have reoffending data in the 18 to 24 months after the interview time interval. This chapter presents findings on participants' reoffending patterns, as well as examining factors related to reoffending.

### 4.1 Reoffending Patterns

Table 4.1 presents the proportion of youth who reoffended at least once at any point following their interview and within each of the three time periods outlined above. Almost one-half of the participants (47.2%) reoffended at least once during the time period from their interview through October 31, 2008, and 43.9% had reoffended by 18 months following their interview. When examined by time period, smaller proportions reoffended within 12 months after their interview (36.6%), 12 to 18 months after their interview (22%), and within 18 to 24 months after their interview (14.6%).

**Table 4.1**  
**Number of Youth Who Reoffended Following**  
**Youth Offender Interview Across Study Groups**

Time Period of Reoffending	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
At any point after interview	65	52.8	58	47.2	123	100.0
Within 12 months after interview	78	63.4	45	36.6	123	100.0
Within 12 to 18 months after interview	96	78.0	27	22.0	123	100.0
Within 18 to 24 months after interview	76	85.4	13	14.6	89	100.0

Source of data: Police Information Management System.

Table 4.2 presents the proportion of youth who reoffended following their interview by study group. As might be expected, Gateway clients were least likely to reoffend (15%), followed by One-time offenders (38.1%), Chronic offenders (58.5%), and SHOs (75%). A similar pattern was observed when data were examined by the time period following the initial interview: Gateway clients were least likely to reoffend within each time period, followed by One-time offenders, Chronic offenders, and SHOs.

**Table 4.2**  
**Number of Youth Who Reoffended Following**  
**Youth Offender Interview by Study Group**

Time Period of Reoffending	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Gateway</b>						
At any point after interview	17	85.0	3	15.0	20	100.0
Within 12 months after interview	18	90.0	2	10.0	20	100.0
Within 12 to 18 months after interview	20	100.0	0	0.0	20	100.0
Within 18 to 24 months after interview	16	94.1	1	5.9	17	100.0
<b>One-time Offenders</b>						
At any point after interview	26	61.9	16	38.1	42	100.0
Within 12 months after interview	30	71.4	12	28.6	42	100.0
Within 12 to 18 months after interview	36	85.7	6	14.3	42	100.0
Within 18 to 24 months after interview	29	96.7	1	3.3	30	100.0
<b>Chronic Offenders</b>						
At any point after interview	17	41.5	24	58.5	41	100.0
Within 12 months after interview	24	58.5	17	41.5	41	100.0
Within 12 to 18 months after interview	29	70.7	12	29.3	41	100.0
Within 18 to 24 months after interview	21	80.8	5	19.2	26	100.0
<b>SHOs</b>						
At any point after interview	5	25.0	15	75.0	20	100.0
Within 12 months after interview	6	30.0	14	70.0	20	100.0
Within 12 to 18 months after interview	11	55.0	9	45.0	20	100.0
Within 18 to 24 months after interview	10	62.5	6	37.5	16	100.0

Source of data: Police Information Management System.

The number of reoffences at any time following their initial interview by youth in each of the study groups is presented in Table 4.3. None of the three Gateway youth who reoffended did so more than once. One-time offenders who reoffended were most likely to do so once (14.3%) or twice (11.9%), although one individual in this group reoffended 16 times. Chronic offenders who reoffended were most likely to reoffend once (19.5%), and none reoffended more than seven times. SHOs who reoffended were also most likely to reoffend once (20%); however, 45% reoffended 10 times or more. The average number of reoffences for youth who reoffended in each group varied across groups with Gateway clients having the lowest average number of reoffences (Mean=1, n=3), followed by One-time offenders (Mean=2.9<sup>3</sup>, n=16), Chronic offenders (Mean=3.2, n=24), and SHOs (Mean=9.1, n=15).

<sup>3</sup> When the one outlier who had 16 reoffences was dropped from this analysis, the mean decreased to 2.1 (n=15).



**Table 4.3**  
**Total Number of Reoffences at Any Point**  
**Following Youth Offender Interview by Study Group**

Number of Reoffences	n	%
<b>Gateway</b>		
0	17	85.0
1	3	15.0
Total	20	100.0
<b>One-time Offenders</b>		
0	26	61.9
1	6	14.3
2	5	11.9
3	2	4.8
4	1	2.4
5	1	2.4
16	1	2.4
Total	42	100.0
<b>Chronic Offenders</b>		
0	17	41.5
1	8	19.5
2	4	9.8
3	2	4.9
4	3	7.3
5	2	4.9
6	2	4.9
7	3	7.3
Total	41	100.0
<b>SHOs</b>		
0	5	25.0
1	4	20.0
6	1	5.0
8	1	5.0
10	2	10.0
11	2	10.0
12	2	10.0
14	1	5.0
15	1	5.0
24	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

Source of data: Police Information Management System.

## 4.2 Factors Associated with Reoffending

The relationship between factors relevant to the five domains identified in the literature (i.e., individual, family, peer group, school, and community) and youth reoffending were examined.

#### 4.2.1 Individual Factors Domain

Several potential risk factors for reoffending classified within the individual domain were examined. Table 4.4 presents the findings for three personal characteristics falling within this domain. There was no significant difference for gender, indicating that males (47.1%) and females (47.6%) were equally likely to reoffend following their initial interview. While reoffending was not significantly related to respondents' ethnicity, there was a trend for Native/Metis youth (60%) and youth of other ethnicities (58.8%) to be more likely to reoffend than Caucasian youth (42.9%). Youths' employment status at the time of the interview was not significantly related to whether they reoffended following the interview.

**Table 4.4**  
**Personal Characteristics of Youth by Whether They**  
**Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview**

Personal Characteristics	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	54	52.9	48	47.1	102	100.0
Female	11	52.4	10	47.6	21	100.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Caucasian	52	57.1	39	42.9	91	100.0
Native/Metis	6	40.0	9	60.0	15	100.0
Other <sup>1</sup>	7	41.2	10	58.8	17	100.0
<b>Employment Status at Time of Interview</b>						
Employed	29	49.2	30	50.8	59	100.0
Not employed	36	56.3	28	43.8	64	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview, Youth Probation File Review and Police Information Management System.

<sup>1</sup> "Other" includes Hispanic (n=3), African (n=2), Mulatto (n=3), Asian (n=6), and Middle Eastern (n=3).

Table 4.5 presents the relationship between alcohol and drug risk factors and reoffending. The substantial majority (91.9%) of all youth in the study reported that they had consumed five or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion. The few youth who had not consumed five or more drinks on one occasion were less likely to have reoffended (20%) than were students who had done so (49.6%); however, this difference was not statistically significant. Youth who reported that they had ever used illegal drugs were significantly more likely to have reoffended (52.8%) than were respondents who had never used illegal drugs (6.7%) ( $X^2(1) = 11.24, p < .001$ ). Respondents who stated that they had ever bought illegal drugs were significantly more likely to have reoffended (53.3%) than were youth who had never bought illegal drugs (29%) ( $X^2(1) = 5.46, p < .05$ ). Similarly, youth who had ever sold illegal drugs were significantly more likely to have reoffended (55.1%) than were those who had never sold illegal drugs (37%) ( $X^2(1) = 3.95, p < .05$ ).

**Table 4.5**  
**Drug and Alcohol Related Behaviour Among Youth by Whether**  
**They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview**

Behaviour	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Had Five or More Alcoholic Drinks on One Occasion</b>						
No	8	80.0	2	20.0	10	100.0
Yes	57	50.4	56	49.6	113	100.0
<b>Ever Used Illegal Drugs***</b>						
No	14	93.3	1	6.7	15	100.0
Yes	51	47.2	57	52.8	108	100.0
<b>Ever Bought Illegal Drugs*</b>						
No	22	71.0	9	29.0	31	100.0
Yes	43	46.7	49	53.3	92	100.0
<b>Ever Sold Illegal Drugs*</b>						
No	34	63.0	20	37.0	54	100.0
Yes	31	44.9	38	55.1	69	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 4.6 presents the relationship between having engaged in property-related delinquent behaviours at the time of the initial interview and subsequent police-apprehended reoffending. For all factors except stolen something worth less than \$50, youth who had engaged in the behaviour at the time of the interview were more likely to subsequently reoffend than were youth who had not engaged in the behaviour. Two property-related delinquent behaviours significantly discriminated between youth who subsequently reoffended and those who did not. Youth who had previously broken into a house were significantly more likely to reoffend (58.2%) than were those who had not broken into a house (38.2%) ( $X^2(1) = 4.86, p < .05$ ). Youth who reported that they had ever stolen a car or motorcycle at the time of the interview were significantly more likely to reoffend (59.6%) than were respondents who had never done this (36.5%) ( $X^2(1) = 5.81, p < .05$ ).

**Table 4.6**  
**Ever Engaging in Property-related Delinquent Behaviour Among Youth**  
**by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview**

Delinquent Behaviour	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Damaged/Destroyed Property on Purpose</b>						
No	22	52.4	20	47.6	42	100.0
Yes	43	53.1	38	46.9	81	100.0
<b>Broken into a House*</b>						
No	42	61.8	26	38.2	68	100.0
Yes	23	41.8	32	58.2	55	100.0
<b>Ever Stolen Something from a Place/Person</b>						
No	9	75.0	3	25.0	12	100.0
Yes	56	50.5	55	49.5	111	100.0
<b>Stolen Something Worth Less Than \$50</b>						
No	12	44.4	15	55.6	27	100.0
Yes	44	53.0	39	47.0	83	100.0
<b>Stolen Something Worth More Than \$50</b>						
No	19	63.3	11	36.7	30	100.0
Yes	37	46.3	43	53.8	80	100.0
<b>Stolen Car or Motorcycle*</b>						
No	33	63.5	19	36.5	52	100.0
Yes	23	40.4	34	59.6	57	100.0
<b>Stolen Something with a Group of Friends</b>						
No	16	51.6	15	48.4	31	100.0
Yes	40	51.3	38	48.7	78	100.0
<b>Ridden Calgary Transit Without Valid Ticket</b>						
No	15	62.5	9	37.5	24	100.0
Yes	50	50.5	49	49.5	99	100.0
<b>Damaged/Vandalized/Tagged Calgary Transit Property</b>						
No	52	56.5	40	43.5	92	100.0
Yes	13	41.9	18	58.1	31	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.

\*  $p < .05$

Table 4.7 presents the relationship between having engaged in acts against persons at the time of the initial interview and subsequent police-apprehended reoffending. For all behaviours, youth who reported engaging in them were more likely to subsequently reoffend. Four of these behaviours significantly discriminated between youth who reoffended and those who did not. Youth who reported that they had taken/tried to take something by force/threat of force at the time of the interview were more likely to subsequently reoffend (59.2%) than were those who had not engaged in this behaviour (40%) ( $\chi^2(1) = 3.97, p < .05$ ).

**Table 4.7**  
**Ever Engaging in Person-related Delinquent Behaviour Among Youth**  
**by Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview**

Delinquent Behaviour	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Taken/Tried to Take Something by Force/Threat of Force*</b>						
No	36	60.0	24	40.0	60	100.0
Yes	20	40.8	29	59.2	49	100.0
<b>Harassed, Threatened, or Bullied Someone</b>						
No	16	64.0	9	36.0	25	100.0
Yes	49	50.0	49	50.0	98	100.0
<b>Harassed, Threatened, or Bullied Someone on Calgary Transit</b>						
No	36	57.1	27	42.9	63	100.0
Yes	13	38.2	21	61.8	34	100.0
<b>Threatened Someone with a Weapon</b>						
No	26	56.5	20	43.5	46	100.0
Yes	23	44.2	29	55.8	52	100.0
<b>Assaulted or Hurt Someone**</b>						
No	21	77.8	6	22.2	27	100.0
Yes	44	45.8	52	54.2	96	100.0
<b>Assaulted/Hurt Someone with a Weapon*</b>						
No	23	59.0	16	41.0	39	100.0
Yes	20	35.7	36	64.3	56	100.0
<b>Assaulted/Hurt Someone on Calgary Transit Property*</b>						
No	31	53.4	27	46.6	58	100.0
Yes	12	32.4	25	67.6	37	100.0
<b>Assaulted Someone with Friends</b>						
No	16	50.0	16	50.0	32	100.0
Yes	28	43.8	36	56.3	64	100.0
<b>With a Group of Friends, Fought with Others</b>						
No	28	63.6	16	36.4	44	100.0
Yes	37	46.8	42	53.2	79	100.0
<b>Sexual Contact with Someone Against Their Will</b>						
No	64	53.3	56	46.7	120	100.0
Yes	0	0.0	2	100.0	2	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

Similarly, over one-half of respondents who had assaulted or hurt someone (54.2%) had police-apprehended reoffending, compared to less than one-quarter (22.2%) of those who had not engaged in this behaviour ( $X^2(1) = 8.63, p < .01$ ). Of the 56 youth who reported that they had assaulted or hurt someone with a weapon at the time of the interview, almost two-thirds (64.3%) subsequently reoffended, compared to 41% of those who had not assaulted or hurt someone with a weapon ( $X^2(1) = 5.02, p < .05$ ). Finally, of the 37 respondents who reported that they had assaulted or hurt someone on Calgary Transit property, 67.6% subsequently reoffended, compared to 46.6% of those who had not engaged in this behaviour ( $X^2(1) = 4.03, p < .05$ ).

A number of mental health factors were examined to determine if they were related to reoffending following the initial interview (see Table 4.8). For most of these factors, youth who exhibited them were more likely to reoffend. It should be noted, however, that several of the mental health diagnoses were present in very few youth, and thus these results should be interpreted with caution. Statistically significant differences were observed with two mental health diagnoses. Youth who had been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder were considerably more likely to reoffend (72.2%) than were youth who did not have this diagnosis (43.5%) ( $X^2(1) = 7.54, p < .01$ ). Similarly, all five youth who had been diagnosed with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder reoffended, compared to just over one-half (51.6%) of youth who did not have this diagnosis ( $X^2(1) = 4.47, p < .05$ ).

**Table 4.8**  
**Mental Health Characteristics of Youth by Whether They**  
**Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview**

Mental Health Characteristics	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Ever Had a Psychological Assessment</b>						
No	22	46.8	25	53.2	47	100.0
Yes	23	47.9	25	52.1	48	100.0
<b>Ever Received Counselling</b>						
No	10	66.7	5	33.3	15	100.0
Yes	35	43.8	45	56.3	80	100.0
<b>Diagnosis of Mental Health Problems</b>						
No	25	54.3	21	45.7	46	100.0
Yes	23	41.1	33	58.9	56	100.0
<b>Depression</b>						
No	31	41.9	43	58.1	74	100.0
Yes	14	58.3	10	41.7	24	100.0
<b>Learning Disability</b>						
No	41	48.2	44	51.8	85	100.0
Yes	4	30.8	9	69.2	13	100.0
<b>Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**</b>						
No	35	56.5	27	43.5	62	100.0
Yes	10	27.8	26	72.2	36	100.0
<b>Conduct Disorder</b>						
No	34	50.7	33	49.3	67	100.0
Yes	11	35.5	20	64.5	31	100.0
<b>Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*</b>						
No	45	48.4	48	51.6	93	100.0
Yes	0	0.0	5	100.0	5	100.0
<b>Anger Issues</b>						
No	35	43.8	45	56.3	80	100.0
Yes	10	55.6	8	44.4	18	100.0

Cont'd

Table 4.8 (cont'd)

Mental Health Characteristics	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Bi-polar Disorder</b>						
No	45	47.4	50	52.6	95	100.0
Yes	0	0.0	3	100.0	3	100.0
<b>Post-traumatic Stress Disorder</b>						
No	43	47.8	47	52.2	90	100.0
Yes	2	25.0	6	75.0	8	100.0
<b>Adjustment Disorder</b>						
No	45	46.4	52	53.6	97	100.0
Yes	0	0.0	1	100.0	1	100.0
<b>Social Anxiety Disorder</b>						
No	44	46.8	50	53.2	94	100.0
Yes	1	25.0	3	75.0	4	100.0
<b>Autism</b>						
No	44	45.4	53	54.6	97	100.0
Yes	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
<b>Attachment Disorder</b>						
No	41	44.6	51	55.4	92	100.0
Yes	4	66.7	2	33.3	6	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Probation File Review and Police Information Management System.

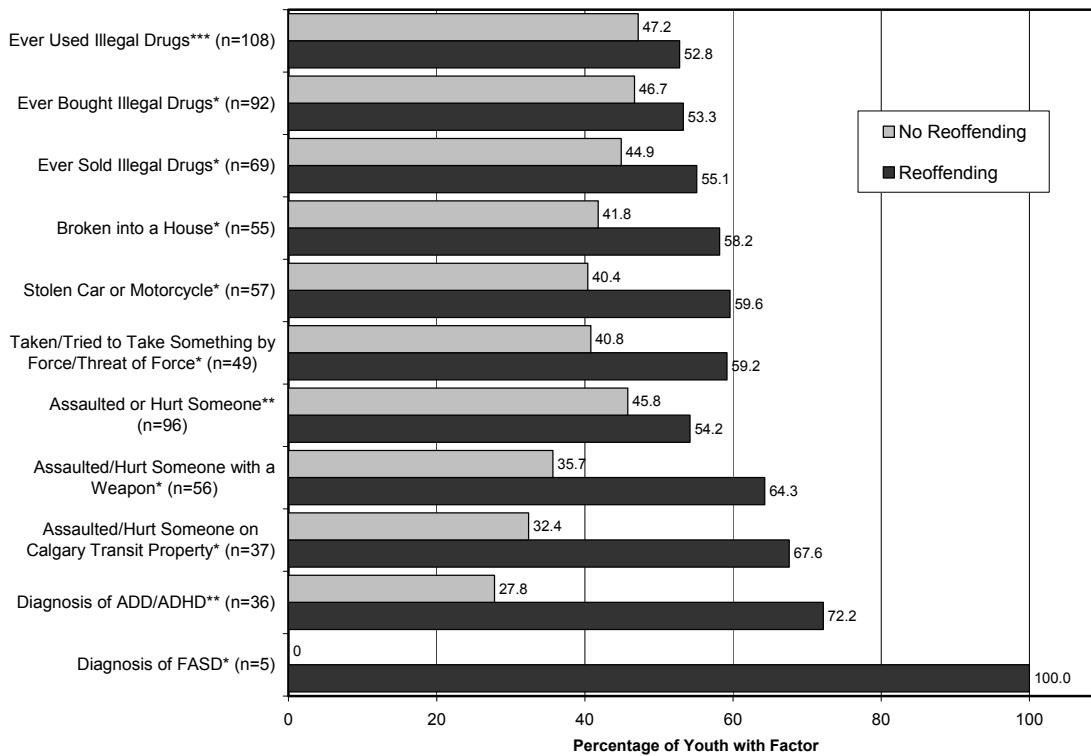
\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

A summary of the factors within the individual domain that significantly discriminated between youth who reoffended and those who did not is presented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Statistically Significant Factors Related to Youth Reoffending within the Individual Factors Domain



Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

4.2.2 Family Factors Domain

Table 4.9 presents the factors related to family characteristics of the youth by whether they had police-apprehended reoffending following their initial interview, and Figure 4.2 highlights the factors that were statistically significant in discriminating between those who did and did not reoffend. In all cases, a greater percentage of youth with factors that are associated with family breakdown were more likely to have reoffended following their interview than were youth who did not have these factors. For example, 52.8% of youth who were not living with both parents at the time of their interview reoffended, compared to 32.4% of youth who lived with both parents ( $X^2(1) = 4.13, p < .05$ ).



**Table 4.9**  
**Family Characteristics of Youth by Whether They**  
**Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview**

Family Characteristics	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Marital Status of Parents</b>						
Married	23	62.2	14	37.8	37	100.0
Other <sup>1</sup>	41	48.2	44	51.8	85	100.0
<b>Current Living Arrangements at Time of Interview*</b>						
Both parents	23	67.6	11	32.4	34	100.0
Other <sup>2</sup>	42	47.2	47	52.8	89	100.0
<b>History of Family Violence/Neglect</b>						
No	18	48.6	19	51.4	37	100.0
Yes	27	46.6	31	53.4	58	100.0
<b>Contact with Child Welfare***</b>						
No	39	69.6	17	30.4	56	100.0
Yes	26	38.8	41	61.2	67	100.0
<b>History of Foster Care*</b>						
No	52	58.4	37	41.6	89	100.0
Yes	13	38.2	21	61.8	34	100.0
<b>History of Residence in Group Home*</b>						
No	44	62.0	27	38.0	71	100.0
Yes	21	40.4	31	59.6	52	100.0
<b>Ever Run Away from Home***</b>						
No	34	72.3	13	27.7	47	100.0
Yes	31	40.8	45	59.2	76	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview, Youth Probation File Review and Police Information Management System.

<sup>1</sup> "Other" includes Never married/common law (n=32), Separated (n=11), Divorced (n=32), and Widowed (n=10).

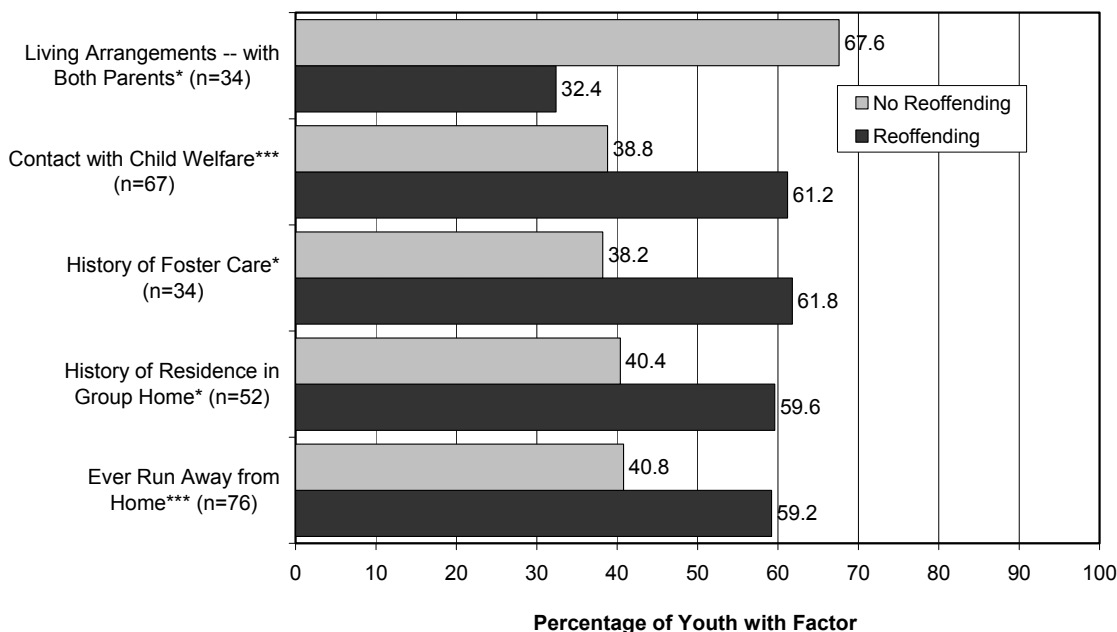
<sup>2</sup> "Other" includes One parent/siblings (n=54), Extended family (n=4), Foster/group home (n=10), Independent/partner (n=7), Incarcerated (n=12), and Other (n=2).

\* p < .05

\*\*\* p < .001

Figure 4.2

**Statistically Significant Factors Related to Youth Reoffending within the Family Factors Domain**



Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

Youth who had a history of involvement with child welfare services and living in arrangements other than with family members were also more likely to reoffend. Of youth who had a history of contact with child welfare, 61.2% reoffended, compared to 30.4% of youth who did not have contact with child welfare ( $X^2(1) = 11.64, p < .001$ ). Of respondents who had been in foster care, 61.8% reoffended, compared to 41.6% who had never been in foster care ( $X^2(1) = 4.03, p < .05$ ). Similarly, a greater proportion of youth who had lived in a group home reoffended (59.6%) than those who had never lived in a group home (38%) ( $X^2(1) = 5.61, p < .05$ ). Finally, youth who had ever run away from home were significantly more likely to reoffend (59.2%) than were youth who had never run away from home (27.7%) ( $X^2(1) = 11.6, p < .001$ ).

**4.2.3 Peer Group Factors Domain**

Eight factors that examine youths' friends and what they do in their leisure time were classified into the peer group factors domain, and the results are presented in Table 4.10. While there was a general trend for youth who participated in organized leisure time activities not to reoffend, this finding was only statistically significant for participation in lessons in dance, music, hobbies, or other non-sports activities. Only 1 of the 10 youth who participated in these activities reoffended, compared to one-half of the youth (50.4%) who did not participate ( $X^2(1) = 6.03, p < .05$ ).

**Table 4.10**  
**Leisure Time Activities and Gang Involvement of Youth by**  
**Whether They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview**

Activities	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Organized Activities</b>						
No	40	47.6	44	52.4	84	100.0
Yes	25	64.1	14	35.9	39	100.0
<b>Sports with Adult Coaching</b>						
No	50	50.5	49	49.5	99	100.0
Yes	15	62.5	9	37.5	24	100.0
<b>Clubs/Groups with Adult Leadership</b>						
No	59	52.2	54	47.8	113	100.0
Yes	6	60.0	4	40.0	10	100.0
<b>Lessons in Dance, Music, Hobbies, Other Non-sport Activities*</b>						
No	56	49.6	57	50.4	113	100.0
Yes	9	90.0	1	10.0	10	100.0
<b>Age of Closest Friends*</b>						
Younger/Same Age/Vary	53	58.2	38	41.8	91	100.0
Older	11	36.7	19	63.3	30	100.0
<b>Friends Belong to a Gang*</b>						
No	41	62.1	25	37.9	66	100.0
Yes	22	40.7	32	59.3	54	100.0
<b>Ever Been a Member of a Gang**</b>						
No	49	62.0	30	38.0	79	100.0
Yes	15	36.6	26	63.4	41	100.0
<b>Gang Member at Time of Interview</b>						
No	55	53.4	48	46.6	103	100.0
Yes	9	52.9	8	47.1	17	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.

\*  $p < .05$

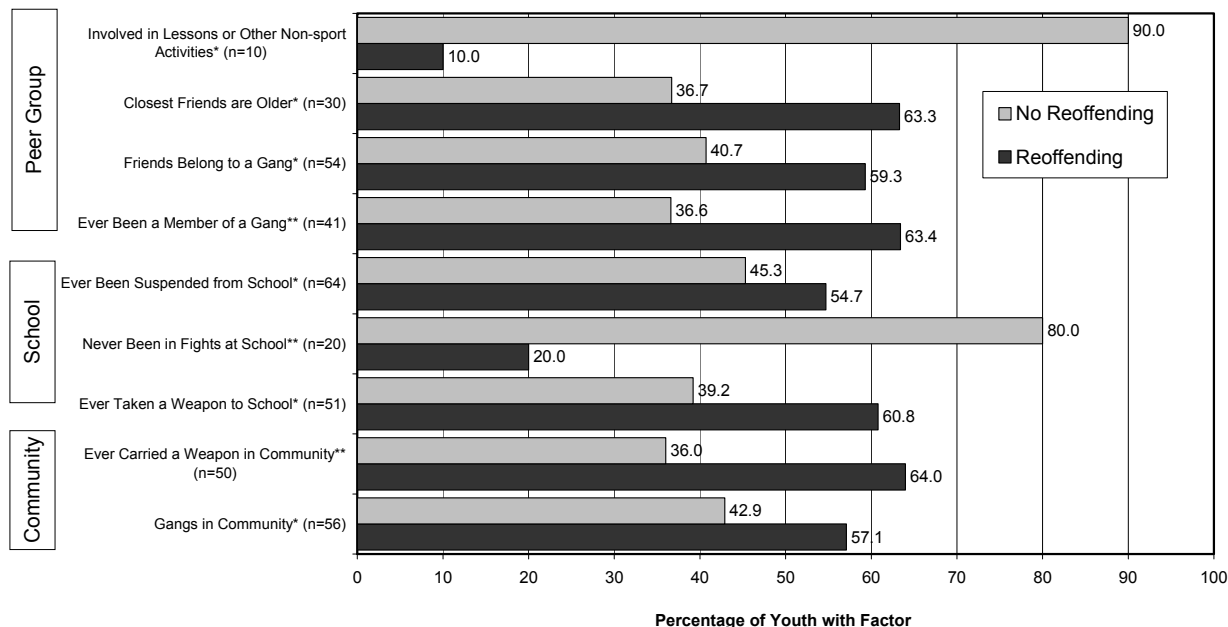
\*\*  $p < .01$

The statistically significant factors within the peer group domain are presented in Figure 4.3. In addition to not being involved in lessons, the age of the youths' closest friends was significantly associated with reoffending. Of the youth who said that most of their friends are older, 63.3% reoffended, compared to 41.8% of youth who stated that most of their friends were younger/the same age/vary in age ( $X^2(1) = 4.22, p < .05$ ).

A youth's history of experience with gangs was also strongly associated with reoffending. Of the youth who stated during their interview that they have friends who belong to a gang, 59.3% reoffended, compared to 37.9% who did not have friends who are gang members ( $X^2(1) = 5.44, p < .05$ ). Similarly, of the youth who reported that they had ever been a member of a gang, almost two-thirds (63.4%) reoffended, compared to 38% who stated that they had never been a member of a gang ( $X^2(1) = 7.02, p < .01$ ).

Figure 4.3

**Statistically Significant Factors Related to Youth Reoffending within the Peer Group, School, and Community Factors Domains**



Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

**4.2.4 School Factors Domain**

Table 4.11 presents the school-related characteristics of youth by whether they reoffended following their initial interview, and the factors that were significantly associated with reoffending are summarized in Figure 4.3. In most cases, a larger percentage of youth with problems at school had reoffended compared to the youth who did not have these factors. Youth who were attending school at the time of the interview and stated that they had been suspended from school were more likely to have reoffended (54.7%) than were youth who had never been suspended (26.1%) ( $X^2(1) = 5.56, p < .05$ ). When asked if they had ever been in fights at school, students who stated that they had been in fights were more likely to have reoffended following their interview (52.9%) than were students who had not been in fights at school (20%) ( $X^2(1) = 7.28, p < .01$ ).

**Table 4.11**  
**School-related Characteristics of Youth by Whether**  
**They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview**

School Characteristics	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>School Status at Time of Interview</b>						
Attending	46	52.9	41	47.1	87	100.0
Not attending	19	52.8	17	47.2	36	100.0
<b>Considered Dropping Out of School<sup>1</sup></b>						
No	23	62.2	14	37.8	37	100.0
Yes	23	46.0	27	54.0	50	100.0
<b>Ever Been Suspended from School<sup>1*</sup></b>						
No	17	73.9	6	26.1	23	100.0
Yes	29	45.3	35	54.7	64	100.0
<b>Ever Been Bullied in School</b>						
No	36	52.9	32	47.1	68	100.0
Yes	29	52.7	26	47.3	55	100.0
<b>Ever Been in Fights at School**</b>						
No	16	80.0	4	20.0	20	100.0
Yes	48	47.1	54	52.9	102	100.0
<b>Ever Taken a Weapon to School*</b>						
No	45	62.5	27	37.5	72	100.0
Yes	20	39.2	31	60.8	51	100.0
<b>Ever Used a Weapon at School</b>						
No	13	34.2	25	65.8	38	100.0
Yes	5	50.0	5	50.0	10	100.0
<b>Gangs at School</b>						
No	32	50.0	32	50.0	64	100.0
Yes	32	58.2	23	41.8	55	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.

<sup>1</sup> This question was only asked of youth who were currently attending school.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

Respondents were asked if they had ever taken a weapon to school. Most youth who reported that they had taken a weapon to school (60.8%) had reoffended, compared to just over one-third (37.5%) of youth who had never taken a weapon to school ( $X^2(1) = 6.50, p < .05$ ).

#### 4.2.5 Community Factors Domain

The community-related characteristics of youth by whether they reoffended in the period following their interview are presented in Table 4.12, and the statistically significant factors are highlighted in Figure 4.3. Interestingly, youth who reported that they felt safe in their community were more likely to have reoffended (50%) than were youth who said that they only felt “generally safe” (33.3%), or unsafe (35.7%). Almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents who reported that they had ever carried a weapon in their community had reoffended, compared to just over one-third (35.6%) of youth who had never carried a weapon in their community ( $X^2(1) = 95.9, p < .01$ ).

When youth were asked if there are gangs in their community, those who responded affirmatively were more likely to have reoffended (57.1%) than were those who said that there are no gangs in their community (39.1%) ( $X^2(1) = 3.92, p < .05$ ).

**Table 4.12**  
**Community-related Characteristics of Youth by Whether**  
**They Have Reoffended Since Youth Offender Interview**

Community Characteristics	Reoffended				Total	
	No		Yes		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
<b>Feelings of Safety in Community</b>						
Safe	50	50.0	50	50.0	100	100.0
Generally safe, sometimes unsafe	6	66.7	3	33.3	9	100.0
Unsafe	9	64.3	5	35.7	14	100.0
<b>Ever Carried Weapon in Community**</b>						
No	47	64.4	26	35.6	73	100.0
Yes	18	36.0	32	64.0	50	100.0
<b>Ever Used Weapon in Community</b>						
No	8	34.8	15	65.2	23	100.0
Yes	10	38.5	16	61.5	26	100.0
<b>Gangs in Community*</b>						
No	39	60.9	25	39.1	64	100.0
Yes	24	42.9	32	57.1	56	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

### 4.3 Number of Risk Factors

In order to examine the relationship between the number of risk factors and reoffending, the number of statistically significant risk factors within each domain and collapsed across domains exhibited by youth who reoffended and those who did not are presented in Table 4.13. Across all domains, youth who reoffended were more likely to have a greater number of risk factors than youth who did not reoffend. For example, in the individual factors domain, all of the youth who reoffended exhibited at least one risk factor. Of the youth who exhibited 5 or fewer risk factors, only 29.2% reoffended, compared to 67.2% of youth who exhibited 6 or more risk factors. Within the family factors domain, 30% of youth who exhibited 2 or fewer risk factors reoffended, compared to 63.4% of youth who exhibited 3 or more risk factors. When data were collapsed across all domains, none of the youth with 5 or fewer risk factors reoffended. Of the youth who exhibited 6 or 7 risk factors, 16.7% reoffended; the likelihood of reoffending increased to 87.5% among youth who exhibited 18 or 19 risk factors.

Table 4.13

Number of Statistically Significant Risk Factors Exhibited by Youth by Reoffending

Number of Risk Factors	Reoffended					
	No		Yes		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Individual Factors Domain</b>						
0	10	100.0	0	0.0	10	100.0
1	5	71.4	2	28.6	7	100.0
2	4	100.0	0	0.0	4	100.0
3	7	58.3	5	41.7	12	100.0
4	9	64.3	5	35.7	14	100.0
5	11	61.1	7	38.9	18	100.0
6	3	30.0	7	70.0	10	100.0
7	3	23.1	10	76.9	13	100.0
8	6	50.0	6	50.0	12	100.0
9	5	35.7	9	64.3	14	100.0
10	2	22.2	7	77.8	9	100.0
11	0	--	0	--	0	--
<b>Family Factors Domain</b>						
0	14	87.5	2	12.5	16	100.0
1	17	65.4	9	34.6	26	100.0
2	11	61.1	7	38.9	18	100.0
3	7	38.9	11	61.1	18	100.0
4	7	30.4	16	69.6	23	100.0
5	9	40.9	13	59.1	22	100.0
<b>Peer Factors Domain</b>						
0	6	100.0	0	0.0	6	100.0
1	31	64.6	17	35.4	48	100.0
2	14	50.0	14	50.0	28	100.0
3	11	36.7	19	63.3	30	100.0
4	3	27.3	8	72.7	11	100.0
<b>School Factors Domain</b>						
0	12	92.3	1	7.7	13	100.0
1	17	56.7	13	43.3	30	100.0
2	28	52.8	25	47.2	53	100.0
3	8	29.6	19	70.4	27	100.0
<b>Community Factors Domain</b>						
0	33	70.2	14	29.8	47	100.0
1	22	47.8	24	52.2	46	100.0
2	10	33.3	20	66.7	30	100.0

Cont'd

Table 4.13 (cont'd)

Number of Risk Factors	Reoffended					
	No		Yes		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>All Domains</b>						
0	2	100.0	0	0.0	2	100.0
1	3	100.0	0	0.0	3	100.0
2	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
3	4	100.0	0	0.0	4	100.0
4	4	100.0	0	0.0	4	100.0
5	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
6	2	66.7	1	33.3	3	100.0
7	8	88.9	1	11.1	9	100.0
8	5	62.5	3	37.5	8	100.0
9	2	40.0	3	60.0	5	100.0
10	6	66.7	3	33.3	9	100.0
11	3	75.0	1	25.0	4	100.0
12	3	42.9	4	57.1	7	100.0
13	4	57.1	3	42.9	7	100.0
14	3	33.3	6	66.7	9	100.0
15	2	50.0	2	50.0	4	100.0
16	2	28.6	5	71.4	7	100.0
17	0	0.0	8	100.0	8	100.0
18	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
19	0	0.0	7	100.0	7	100.0
20	5	62.5	3	37.5	8	100.0
21	2	28.6	5	71.4	7	100.0
22	2	40.0	3	60.0	5	100.0
23	0	--	0	--	0	--
24	0	--	0	--	0	--
25	0	--	0	--	0	--

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview , Youth Probation File Review and Police Information Management System.

To further examine the number of risk factors exhibited by youth who reoffended and those who did not reoffend, the sum of the statistically significant risk factors that were present for each youth was calculated within each domain, as well as across domains. Since the number of statistically significant factors within each domain differed, the maximum score was different for each domain: scores on the individual factors domain could range from 0 (no risk factors present) to 11 (all risk factors present), scores on the family factors domains could vary from 0 to 5; scores on the peer factors domain could range from 0 to 4; scores on the school factors domain could range from 0 to 3; scores on the community factors domain could vary from 0 to 2; and total scores across the domains could range from 0 to 25.

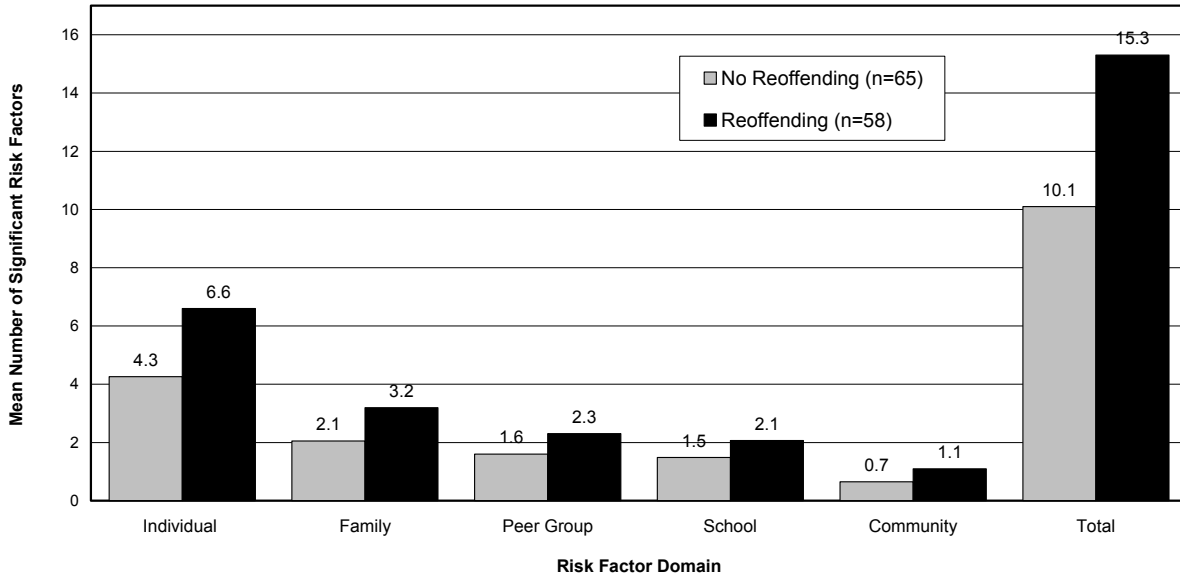
The average number of risk factors present within each domain and across all domains by reoffending and no reoffending is presented in Figure 4.4. In all cases, the average number of factors present was higher for youth who reoffended than for those who did not reoffend. These differences were statistically significant in all cases:



individual factors domain,  $t(121) = 4.77, p < .001$ ; family factors domain,  $t(121) = 3.92, p < .001$ ; peer factors domain,  $t(121) = 3.79, p < .001$ ; school factors domain,  $t(121) = 3.66, p < .001$ ; community factors domain,  $t(121) = 3.37, p < .001$ ; and total across domains,  $t(121) = 5.46, p < .001$ .

**Figure 4.4**

**Average Number of Statistically Significant Risk Factors within Each Domain, by Youths' Reoffending**

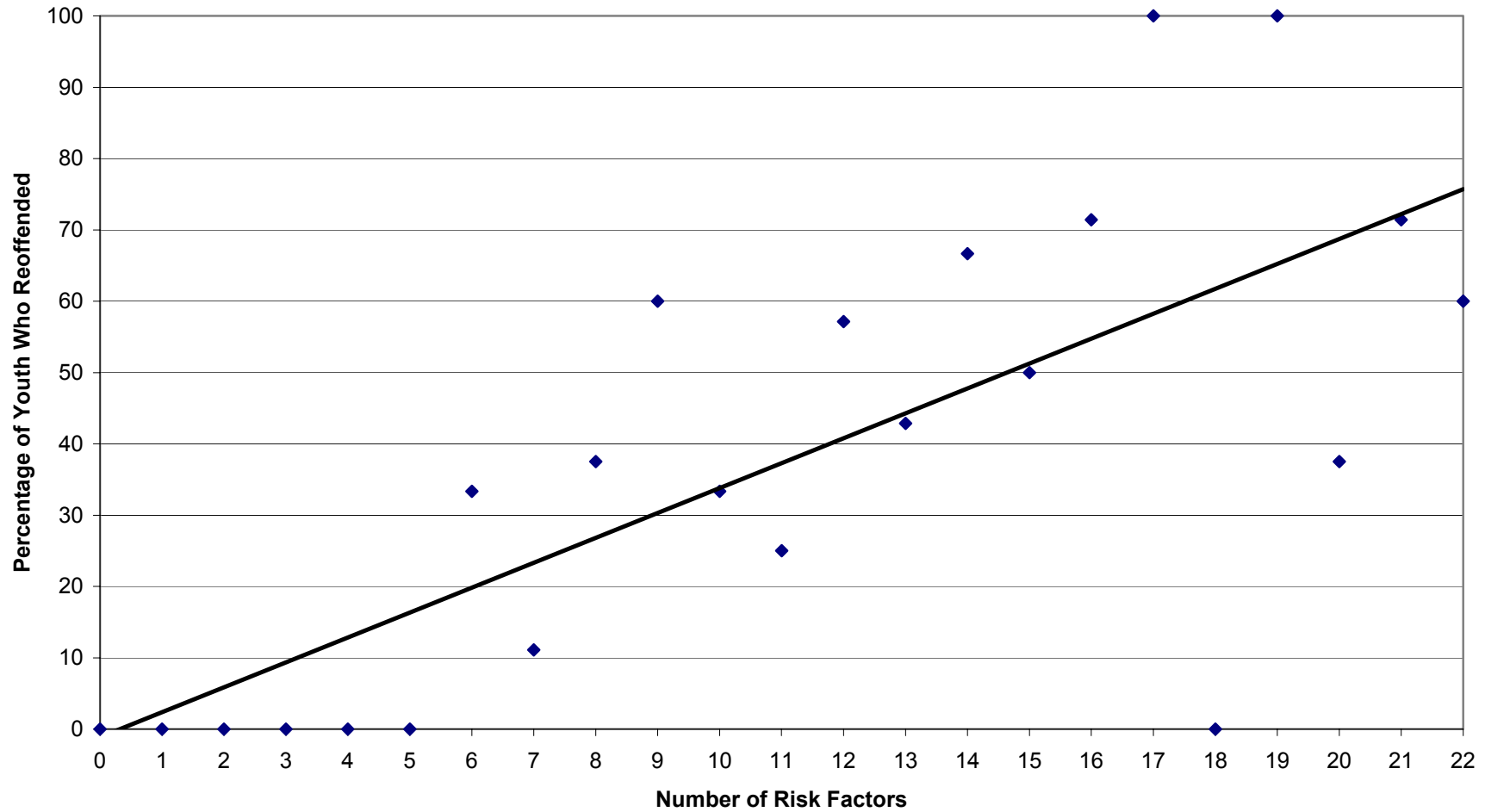


Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview and Police Information Management System.  
 Number of Significant Risk Factors Vary by Domain: Individual=11; Family=5; Peer Group=4; School=3;  
 Community=2; Total=25.

Figure 4.5 plots the regression analysis of the percentage of youth who reoffended by number of risk factors. As shown, the relationship is linear, indicating that as the number of risk factors increases, the likelihood of reoffending also increases.

Figure 4.5

Regression Analysis of Percentage of Youth Who Reoffended by Number of Risk Factors



Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview, Youth Probation File Review, and Police Information Management System.

Regression Equation:  $y = 3.4929x - 1.1482$ ,  $R^2 = 0.5304$

#### 4.4 Number of Domains with Risk Factors

In addition to the relationship between number of risk factors and reoffending, it is possible that having risk factors in multiple domains is also associated with a higher probability of reoffending than having risk factors in fewer domains. In order to assess this hypothesis, the number of domains in which youth exhibited statistically significant risk factors was summed to yield a score for each youth ranging from 0 to 5. Table 4.14 presents the number of domains within which youth who reoffended and did not reoffend exhibited risk factors. There was a clear pattern for youth who reoffended to have risk factors in a greater number of domains than youth who did not reoffend. All youth who reoffended had risk factors in either four or five domains; among youth who did not reoffend, almost one-third (29.3%) had risk factors in three or fewer domains. Over two-thirds (70.7%) of youth who reoffended had risk factors in all five domains, compared to 35.4% of youth who did not reoffend. These findings indicate that having risk factors in multiple domains is associated with an increased likelihood of reoffending.

**Table 4.14**  
**Number of Domains Within Which Youth Exhibited**  
**Statistically Significant Risk Factors by Reoffending**

Number of Domains	Reoffended			
	No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%
0	2	3.1	0	0.0
1	3	4.6	0	0.0
2	2	3.1	0	0.0
3	12	18.5	0	0.0
4	23	35.4	17	29.3
5	23	35.4	41	70.7
Total	65	100.0	58	100.0

Sources of data: Youth Offender Interview, Youth Probation File Review and Police Information Management System.

The average number of domains within which youth who reoffended and those who did not reoffend was computed. Youth who reoffended had risk factors in a significantly greater number of domains (mean = 4.71) than did youth who did not reoffend (mean = 3.85),  $t(121) = 4.94$ ,  $p < .001$ .

#### 4.5 Best Predictors of Youth Reoffending

The results presented in Section 4.2 identified a number of risk factors within five domains that are significantly associated with youth reoffending. The analyses presented in this section were designed to identify which of these factors are most important in predicting reoffending. Since both the dependent variable (i.e., whether or not a youth reoffended) and the risk factors are dichotomous (i.e., either present or absent), analyses were conducted using a binary logistic regression procedure. By utilizing a forward stepwise logistic regression model, the risk factors are assessed one at a time to determine which provide the highest degree of accuracy in predicting reoffending. The factor with the highest level of predictability is entered into the

regression equation on the first step. Subsequent risk factors are tested one at a time to determine if their addition to the regression equation significantly enhances the prediction of reoffending. When the inclusion of additional risk factors no longer significantly enhances prediction of reoffending, the procedure terminates. The Wald statistic was used to assess the statistical significance of risk factors in predicting reoffending.

#### 4.5.1 Individual Factors Domain

As presented in Section 4.2.1 above, 11 risk factors classified into the individual factors domain were significantly associated with reoffending:

- used illegal drugs;
- bought illegal drugs;
- sold illegal drugs;
- broken into a house;
- stolen a car or motorcycle;
- taken/trying to take something by force/threat of force;
- assaulted someone;
- assaulted/hurt someone with a weapon;
- assaulted/hurt someone on Calgary Transit property;
- diagnosis of ADD/ADHD; and
- diagnosis of FASD.

When these 11 risk factors were included in a forward stepwise binary logistic regression, the first factor to enter the equation was diagnosis of ADD/ADHD (Wald(1) = 7.64,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that this risk factor was the strongest single predictor among the 11 factors of reoffending. None of the remaining 10 factors was entered into the equation on the second step, indicating that adding any of the other factors did not significantly enhance the ability to predict reoffending.

#### 4.5.2 Family Factors Domain

Five risk factors that were classified into the family factors domain were significantly associated with reoffending: living arrangements at the time of the initial interview; prior contact with child welfare services; history of foster care; history of residence in a group home; and ever run away from home. A forward stepwise binary logistic regression analysis using these factors to predict reoffending indicated that the first factor to enter the regression equation was prior contact with child welfare services (Wald(1) = 11.22,  $p < .001$ ). In this analysis, the ever run away from home factor was entered into the equation on the second step (Wald(1) = 5.07,  $p < .05$ ), indicating that these two factors in combination allowed for a significantly more accurate prediction of reoffending than either factor alone.

#### 4.5.3 Peer Factors Domain

As discussed in Section 4.2.3 above, four risk factors classified into the peer factors domain were significantly associated with reoffending: involvement in lessons or

other non-sport activities; age of closest friends; friends belong to a gang; and ever been a member of a gang. When these four risk factors were entered into a forward stepwise binary logistic regression analysis, the first factor to enter the equation was friends belong to a gang ( $Wald(1) = 5.93, p < .05$ ). In this analysis, involvement in lessons or other non-sport activities was entered into the equation on the second step ( $Wald(1) = 3.88, p < .05$ ), indicating that these two factors in combination allowed for a more accurate prediction of reoffending than either factor alone. Neither of the other two factors were entered on subsequent steps. Neither of the other two factors were entered into the equation on the second step, indicating that the addition of the other factors would not significantly enhance the ability to predict reoffending.

#### 4.5.4 School Factors Domain

Three risk factors classified into the school factors domain were significantly associated with reoffending: ever been suspended from school; ever been in fights at school; and ever taken a weapon to school. When these factors were entered into a forward stepwise binary logistic regression analysis, the first factor to enter the equation was ever taken a weapon to school ( $Wald(1) = 5.35, p < .05$ ). Neither of the remaining factors were entered into the equation on the second step, indicating that adding either of them did not significantly increase the ability to predict reoffending.

#### 4.5.5 Community Factors Domain

As presented in Section 4.2.5 above, two risk factors classified into the community factors domain were significantly associated with reoffending: ever carried a weapon in the community and the presence of gangs in the community. When these two risk factors were included in a forward stepwise binary logistic regression analysis, the first factor to enter the equation was ever carried a weapon in the community ( $Wald(1) = 10.17, p < .001$ ). The presence of gangs in the community was not entered into the equation of the second step, indicating that its addition would not significantly enhance the ability to predict reoffending.



## 5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The first section of this chapter provides summaries of Chapter 3.0, which presented the youth offending profiles developed in the first stage of the three-year project, and Chapter 4.0, the patterns of youth reoffending for the youth in the original study sample. The second part of this chapter provides a discussion of the findings from the study and conclusions.

### 5.1 Summaries

#### 5.1.1 Youth Offending Profiles

In order to create a profile of youth offenders in Calgary, four groups of youth with varying contact with the youth criminal justice system were identified. These groups were: Gateway clients (youth diverted into an extrajudicial measures program); One-time offenders (youth having one substantive offence for which they had been found guilty); Chronic offenders (youth having five or more substantive offences for which they had been found guilty); and Serious Habitual Offenders (SHOs) (youth identified by the Calgary Police Service as at-risk of a career of crime).

In-depth interviews and probation file reviews were conducted for 123 youth falling into these study groups. The results are presented below by study group.

#### Gateway Clients

- There were slightly more females in the Gateway group than males, and the average age was 15.6 years.
- Almost all Gateway clients were Caucasian and were born in Canada.
- At the time of the interview, over one-half of the respondents reported that their parents were married, and almost one-third said that their parents were separated or divorced.
- One-half of the Gateway clients were living with both parents, and one-half were living with one parent.
- Almost all of the youth reported that both their parents were employed.
- One-fifth of Gateway clients had run away from home at some point in their lives.
- Very few of the Gateway youth had had any involvement with the child welfare system.
- At the time of the interview, all of the Gateway youth were attending school. One-half reported skipping classes, while two-fifths stated that they had been suspended and just under one-third considered dropping out.

- Almost one-half of the youth reported being bullied at school, while almost three-fifths said that they had been in fights at school.
- Only one Gateway client reported that they had ever taken a weapon to school.
- Almost all of the youth met their friends at school. Three-quarters had friends the same age as themselves, and almost all said that their parents approve of their friends.
- The majority of Gateway clients reported regularly engaging in leisure activities with their parents, as well as participating in organized after-school activities and adult-coached sports.
- The vast majority of these youth reported feeling safe both at home at night and in their community after dark. Youth also reported feeling safe while waiting for or riding the bus or LRT alone after dark.
- Very few Gateway clients had ever carried or used a weapon in the community. Of those who did, the most common weapons were knives or other weapons (e.g., clubs, homemade weapons, pellet/BB guns).
- Three-quarters of the respondents reported having 5 or more drinks on one occasion, and 60% reported using illegal drugs. The most common illegal drugs used were marijuana, mushrooms, and ecstasy.
- Approximately one-third of the Gateway clients had bought or sold illegal drugs at some point in their lives.
- One-third of the youth reported that they had damaged or destroyed someone else's property, but only one youth reported breaking into a house.
- Over four-fifths of the Gateway respondents reported that they had ever stolen something, and over one-half reported that they had stolen something with a group of friends.
- None of the Gateway clients reported taking or trying to take something by force or threat of force. However, over one-half had harassed, threatened or bullied someone; of these, only one had threatened someone with a weapon.
- One-quarter of the youth reported that they had assaulted or hurt someone, and almost one-half had fought others with a group of friends.
- Only three Gateway clients reported that a gang had tried to recruit them. Only two said that they had ever been a member of a gang, and only one was a gang member at the time of the interview.



## One-time Offenders

- Over four-fifths of the One-time offenders were male and their average age was 16.4 years.
- Almost three-quarters of the One-time offenders were Caucasian and almost all were born in Canada.
- At the time of the interview, one-third of the One-time offenders indicated that their parents were married, while two-fifths stated that their parents were either separated or divorced.
- One-third of these youth said that they lived with both parents, and almost one-half lived with one parent.
- Three-quarters of the One-time offenders said that both of their parents were employed.
- One-half of these youth had run away from home at some point in their lives.
- Almost one-half of the One-time offenders had a history of family violence as indicated in their probation files.
- Over one-third of these respondents reported having contact with child welfare services at some point. Less than one-fifth of the youth had ever been in foster care, while one-quarter had been in a group home.
- Over one-quarter of the One-time offenders had a psychological assessment conducted on them, and over two-thirds had received counselling.
- The majority of One-time offenders were not diagnosed with a mental health disorder. For those who were, ADD/ADHD and Conduct Disorder were the most common mental health diagnoses.
- At the time of the interview, just over two-thirds of the One-time offenders said that they were attending school. Three-fifths reported skipping classes, and over four-fifths had been suspended. Over one-half said they considered dropping out of school at some point.
- Over one-half of the youth had been bullied at school, and four-fifths had been in fights at school.
- Just over one-third of these respondents said they took a weapon to school and, of these, one-fifth said that they had used it. The most common weapon taken to school was a knife.

- Over three-quarters of the One-time offenders met their friends at school. One-half had friends the same age as themselves, and one-quarter said their friends were mostly older. One-half said that their parents approve of their friends, while one-quarter said their parents do not approve of their friends.
- Almost one-half of the One-time offenders never engaged in leisure activities with their parents, and few engaged in organized activities with adult leadership.
- The majority of these youth reported feeling safe both at home at night and in their community after dark. Youth also reported feeling safe while waiting for or riding the bus or LRT alone after dark.
- One-third of One-time offenders had carried a weapon in their community and, of these, almost one-half had used it. The most common weapon type was other weapons such as clubs, homemade weapons, and pellet/BB guns.
- Almost all respondents reported having 5 or more drinks on one occasion, and over four-fifths reported using illegal drugs. The most common illegal drugs used were marijuana, ecstasy, and mushrooms.
- Almost three-quarters of these One-time offenders had bought illegal drugs at some point in their lives, and almost one-half had sold illegal drugs.
- Over four-fifths of these respondents reported that they had ever stolen something, and two-thirds reported that they had stolen something with a group of friends.
- One-third of the One-time offenders reported taking or trying to take something by force or threat of force. Over four-fifths had harassed, threatened or bullied someone; of these, almost half had threatened someone with a weapon.
- Four-fifths of these youth reported that they had assaulted or hurt someone; of these, almost half had done this with a weapon. Two-thirds of the One-time offenders had fought others with a group of friends.
- One-third of the One-time offenders reported that a gang had tried to recruit them. Less than one-fifth said that they had ever been a member of a gang, and only one reported being a gang member at the time of the interview.

### Chronic Offenders

- Almost all Chronic offenders were male and their average age was 16.8.
- Over four-fifths were Caucasian and almost all were born in Canada.

- At the time of the interview, fewer than one-fifth of the respondents stated that their parents were married, while over one-third indicated that their parents were separated or divorced, and a further one-third said their parents were never married.
- Just over one-tenth of the youth reported they were living with both parents, while over one-third said they were living with one parent. Almost 20% were living in a foster/group home, and over 20% were incarcerated at the time of the interview.
- At the time of the interview, two-thirds of the Chronic offenders indicated that their mother was employed, and just over one-half indicated that their father was employed.
- Over four-fifths of the respondents had run away from home at some point in their lives.
- Almost three-quarters of the Chronic offenders had a history of family violence as indicated in their probation files.
- Over four-fifths of the youth reported having contact with child welfare services. Over one-third had been in foster care, and over 70% had been in a group home.
- Almost two-thirds of the Chronic offenders had a psychological assessment conducted on them, and all of them had received counselling.
- Probation file review data revealed that two-thirds of Chronic offenders were diagnosed with a mental health disorder. The most common disorders included ADD/ADHD, Conduct Disorder, and Learning Disorder. All of the youth were diagnosed with more than one disorder.
- At the time of the interview, just over two-thirds of these respondents said that they were attending school. Just over three-quarters reported skipping classes, and a little over four-fifths had been suspended. Two-thirds said they considered dropping out of school at some point.
- Over one-third of these youth had been bullied at school, and almost all had been in fights at school.
- Almost half of the Chronic offenders said they took a weapon to school and, of these, one-fifth said that they had used it. The most common weapon taken to school was a knife.
- Three-fifths of the Chronic offenders met their friends at school, while one-fifth met them on the street, and one-tenth met them in jail. Three-fifths had friends the same age as themselves, and almost one-quarter said that their friends were mostly older. Less than one-third said that their parents approve of their friends, while two-fifths said their parents do not approve of their friends.

- Over one-half of the Chronic offenders never engaged in leisure activities with their parents, and few engaged in organized activities with adult leadership.
- The vast majority of these youth reported feeling safe both at home at night and in their community after dark. Youth also reported feeling safe while waiting for or riding the bus or LRT alone after dark.
- Over one-half of the Chronic offenders had carried a weapon in their community and, of these, almost three-fifths had used it. The most common weapon type was a knife.
- All of these respondents reported having 5 or more drinks on one occasion, and all had used illegal drugs. The most common illegal drugs used were marijuana, ecstasy, and mushrooms.
- Almost all of the Chronic offenders had bought illegal drugs at some point in their lives, and over two-thirds had sold illegal drugs.
- All of these respondents reported that they had ever stolen something, and almost three-quarters reported that they had stolen something with a group of friends.
- Three-fifths of the Chronic offenders reported taking or trying to take something by force or threat of force. Four-fifths had harassed, threatened or bullied someone; of these, three-fifths had threatened someone with a weapon.
- Almost all of the youth reported that they had assaulted or hurt someone; of these, 60% had done this with a weapon. Two-thirds had fought others with a group of friends.
- Three-fifths of the Chronic offenders reported that a gang had tried to recruit them. Over one-half said that they had ever been a member of a gang, and almost one-quarter reported that at the time of the interview they were gang members.

### SHOs

- All of the SHOs were male and their average age was 17 years.
- One-half of the SHOs were Caucasian and almost one-third were Native. Almost all of the SHOs were born in Canada.
- At the time of the interview, one-quarter of SHOs said that their parents were married, another quarter said they were separated or divorced, and one-third said their parents were never married.

- One-quarter of these respondents said they lived with both parents, while over one-half said they lived with one parent. Three SHOs were incarcerated at the time of the interview.
- At the time of the interview, just over one-half of the SHOs stated that their mother was currently employed, and almost 90% indicated that their father was currently employed.
- Four-fifths of the SHOs had run away from home at some point in their lives.
- Almost 70% of these youth had a history of family violence as indicated in their probation files.
- Three-quarters of these respondents reported having contact with child welfare services. One-half had been in foster care, and two-thirds had been in a group home.
- Three-quarters of the SHOs had a psychological assessment conducted on them, and the vast majority had received counselling.
- Probation file review data showed that three-quarters of SHOs had been diagnosed with a mental health disorder. The most common disorders included ADD/ADHD and Conduct Disorder.
- At the time of the interview, half of the youth in this group said that they were attending school. Over three-quarters had skipped classes, and 90% had been suspended. Almost four-fifths said they considered dropping out of school at some point.
- Less than one-third of the SHOs had been bullied at school, and all of the respondents had been in fights at school.
- Three-quarters of the SHOs said they took a weapon to school and, of these, almost one-quarter said that they had used it. The most common weapon taken to school was a knife.
- Less than one-half of the SHOs met their friends at school, while almost one-third said that they met them in youth custody. Almost half of these respondents said that their friends were older, and 40% said they were the same age. Only one-quarter said their parents approve of their friends, while two-fifths said their parents do not approve of their friends.
- Over half of the SHOs never engaged in leisure activities with their parents, and almost none engaged in organized activities with adult leadership.
- Almost all of the youth reported feeling safe both at home at night and in their community after dark. Youth also reported feeling safe while waiting for or riding the bus or LRT alone after dark.

- Over one-half of the SHOs had carried a weapon in their community and, of these, three-fifths had used it. The most common weapon type was a knife.
- All of these respondents reported having 5 or more drinks on one occasion, and all had used illegal drugs. The most common illegal drugs used were marijuana, ecstasy, and mushrooms.
- Almost all of the SHOs had bought illegal drugs at some point in their lives, and over two-thirds had sold illegal drugs.
- Almost all of these respondents reported that they had ever stolen something, and almost all reported that they had stolen something with a group of friends.
- Almost three-quarters of the SHOs reported taking or trying to take something by force or threat of force. The vast majority had harassed, threatened or bullied someone; of these, over four-fifths had threatened someone with a weapon.
- All of the youth in this study group reported that they had assaulted or hurt someone, and 90% of these had done this with a weapon. Three-quarters had fought others with a group of friends.
- Two-thirds of the SHOs reported that a gang had tried to recruit them. Over one-half said that they had ever been a member of a gang, and almost one-third reported that at the time of the interview, they were gang members.

#### 5.1.2 Youth Reoffending Patterns

Data for chargeable incidents were obtained from the Police Information Management System (PIMS) of the Calgary Police Service on the reoffending patterns of the 123 youth interviewed for this study from the date of their initial interview (between July 12, 2006 and July 18, 2007) through October 31, 2008. Reoffending was examined during three time periods: within 12 months after the interview; within 12 to 18 months after the interview; and, where possible, within 18 to 24 months after the interview. To determine which of the individual, family, peer, school, and community characteristics were significantly associated with reoffending, data were analyzed using bivariate chi-square analysis and logistic regression. Summaries of the findings are presented below.

#### Reoffending Patterns

- Just over one-third of youth reoffended within 12 months of the interview. This increased to 43.9% by 18 months after the interview, and nearly one-half of the youth had reoffended by 24 months after the interview.
- Gateway clients were least likely to reoffend (15%) followed by just over one-third of One-time offenders. Just over half of the Chronic offenders reoffended, compared to three-quarters of the SHOs.

- SHOs were the most likely to continue offending 12 to 18 (45%) and 18 to 24 (37.5%) months following the interview. Nearly one-third of Chronic offenders reoffended 12 to 18 months following the interview, and nearly 20% reoffended 18 to 24 months following the interview. Few youth in the Gateway or One-time offender groups reoffended more than 12 months after the interview.
- None of the three Gateway youth who reoffended did so more than once, and One-time offenders were most likely to do so only once or twice.
- Two-thirds of Chronic offenders and three-quarters of SHOs who reoffended did so more than once; a majority of the SHOs who reoffended did so more than 10 times (60%).
- The average number of reoffences for youth who reoffended varied across groups, with Gateway clients having the lowest average number of reoffences (1), followed by One-time offenders (2.9), Chronic offenders (3.2), and SHOs (9.1).

#### Factors Associated with Reoffending

- Males and females in the sample were equally likely to reoffend (47.1% and 47.6%, respectively). While reoffending was not significantly related to respondent's ethnicity, nearly two-thirds of Native/Métis youth and just over half of youth in other ethnic groups reoffended, compared to just over 40% of the Caucasian youth in the study sample.
- Employment status at the time of the interview was not significantly related to reoffending.
- Delinquency factors within the individual factors domain that were significantly related to youth reoffending included: ever used illegal drugs; ever bought illegal drugs; ever sold illegal drugs; ever broken into a house; ever stolen a car or motorcycle; ever taken/tried to take something by force/threat of force; ever assaulted or hurt someone; ever assaulted/hurt someone with a weapon; and ever assaulted/hurt someone on Calgary Transit property.
- Two mental health factors that were significantly related to youth reoffending were: diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD); and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). Though few youth in the sample had a diagnosis of FASD (n=5), it is important to note that all youth with this diagnosis reoffended. Further, it is possible that there may be some undiagnosed FASD youth in the sample.
- Factors significantly related to youth reoffending within the family factors domain included: youth who were not living with both parents; history of contact with child welfare; history of foster care; history of residence in a group home; and ever run away from home.

- Four factors within the peer group domain were significantly related to youth reoffending: not being involved in lessons in dance, music, hobbies, or other non-sport activities; having older friends; friends belong to a gang; and membership in a gang.
- The factors within the school domain that were significantly related to youth reoffending were: ever been suspended from school; ever been in a fight at school; and ever taken a weapon to school.
- Factors significantly related to youth reoffending within the community factors domain were: ever carried a weapon in community; and presence of gangs in community.

#### Number of Risk Factors

- Across all domains, youth who reoffended were more likely to have a greater number of risk factors than youth who did not reoffend.
- In the individual risk factors domain, all of the youth who reoffended exhibited at least one risk factor.
- Almost three-quarters of youth who had all four risk factors in the peer group domain reoffended.
- In all cases, the average number of factors present was higher for youth who reoffended than for those who did not reoffend, indicating that as the number of risk factors increases, the likelihood of reoffending also increases.

#### Number of Domains with Risk Factors

- All youth who reoffended had risk factors in either four or five domains; among youth who did not reoffend, almost one-third had risk factors in three or fewer domains.
- Over two-thirds of youth who reoffended had risk factors in all five domains, suggesting that having risk factors in multiple domains increased the likelihood of reoffending.
- Youth who reoffended had risk factors in a significantly greater number of domains than did youth who did not reoffend.

#### Best Predictors of Youth Reoffending

- The logistic regression analysis revealed that the best predictor of youth reoffending within the individual factors domain was a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD.



- Within the family factors domain the best predictor of reoffending was prior contact with child welfare services; however, having run away from home in combination with contact with child welfare services allowed for a significantly more accurate prediction of reoffending than either factor alone.
- The best predictor of youth reoffending within the peer factors domain was having friends who belonged to a gang; however, not having involvement in lessons or other non-sport activities in combination with having friends who belonged to a gang allowed for a significantly more accurate prediction of reoffending than either factor alone.
- The best predictor of youth reoffending within the school factors domain was ever taken a weapon to school.
- The best predictor of youth reoffending within the community factors domain was ever carried a weapon in the community.

## **5.2 Discussion and Conclusions**

The objectives of the final stage of CRILF's three-year study of youth offending in Calgary were to: re-examine the profiles of the 123 youth in the original study sample and determine how they differed on individual, family, peer, school and community factors; and to determine which factors among the five domains of individual, family, peer, school, and community are most significantly associated with youth reoffending. The following research questions directed this stage of the study:

- (1) How did youth in each of the Gateway, One-time, Chronic, and Serious Habitual Offender groups differ on the five individual, family, peer group, school, and community domains in the original study profiles?
- (2) How did youth in each of the study groups differ on reoffending?
- (3) Which factors within the five domains of individual, family, peer group, school, and community are significantly related to youth reoffending?
- (4) Is reoffending more likely as the number of risk factors exhibited by a youth increase?
- (5) Does having risk factors in multiple domains increase the likelihood of youth reoffending?

### **5.2.1 Discussion**

The first stage of the three-year study clearly established that youth with different degrees of involvement in the youth justice system also differ on a number of individual, family, peer, school, and community characteristics (MacRae et al., 2008). These patterns were similar to those found in an increasing body of literature addressing the risk and protective factors associated with youth offending. This knowledge has value

for use in public policy, notably by Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force. The Task Force's 2007 report, developed as a result of consultations with communities across the province, stressed the need to understand the characteristics that distinguish young people who engage in criminal behaviour from those who do not. The report further emphasized the importance of identifying and understanding those factors that "buffer young people from risks and promote positive youth development," and in turn prevent them from becoming seriously involved in crime (Alberta Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007:34).

Consistent with this recommendation, the results of CRILF's first report for the study (MacRae et al., 2008) have already generated local public policy and program changes, namely in the development of the City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services' Critical Hours Program, providing structured activities to youth during the "critical hours" of 3 pm to 6 pm. The City of Calgary and Calgary Police Service also benefited from the study results in the development of the Multi-Agency School Support Team (MASST) initiative, an early intervention response where a social worker and a police officer team work with children under 12 who exhibit risk factors and offending behaviour, and their families, within the school context. The City of Calgary Youth Probation's newly developed Intensive Support and Supervision Order Program for youth sentenced under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, as well as the Youth Employment Centre Outreach Program, which works with youth in the Calgary Young Offender Centre prior to release, also benefited from the local knowledge generated from the CRILF study.

However, given the descriptive, cross-sectional nature of the profile data collected, it was difficult to determine conclusively which factors significantly predicted the likelihood that the youth in the sample would reoffend. The follow-up police contact data enabled the CRILF project to be one of the very few Canadian longitudinal studies examining the predictive nature of various characteristics in the individual, family, peer, school, and community domains that place youth at risk for reoffending. At the most basic level, nearly half the sample had further contact with the police (chargeable incident) after they were interviewed. As expected, Gateway clients – the least serious of the offender categories – were the least likely to reoffend, particularly more than once, whereas serious habitual offenders were the most likely, averaging roughly 9 reoffences in the period of time examined. Though SHOs are, by definition, more likely to be under police scrutiny, the fact that the research team only examined substantive chargeable incidents (not administration of justice offences/breaches) speaks to the seriousness of their continued offending, as well as the effectiveness of the police in monitoring these high risk offenders. Where Chronic offenders were less likely to reoffend than SHOs, still over half continued to have contact with the police after the initial interview.

Using these reoffending data, the researchers examined which factors among the five domains that have been consistently examined in the literature – individual, family, peer, school, community – were most highly associated with reoffending among the Calgary study sample.

## Individual Factors Domain

The literature has explored a number of individual factors such as gender, ethnicity, drug/alcohol use, delinquent behaviour, and mental/emotional health, many of which have shown a consistent relationship to repeated, chronic offending (Chung et al., 2002; DeGusti et al., 2008; Howell 2003; Mullis et al., 2005; Turner et al., 2007). Interestingly, gender was not found to be significantly associated with reoffending for this study sample. Recent research (Haapanen et al., 2007; Howell, 2003) into criminal careers and life course offending demonstrating that females are increasingly being represented in the population of chronic offenders. CRILF did not find ethnicity or employment status to be significantly related to youth offending.

With regard to substance use, the use of drugs and alcohol was found to differ among the various study groups in the original profiles (MacRae et al., 2008). The reoffending data suggested that though alcohol use was not found to be significant, having used illegal drugs, bought illegal drugs, and sold illegal drugs were significantly associated with reoffending. Similarly, when examining delinquency, property-related offences such as breaking into a house and stolen a car/motorcycle, and person-related offences such as attempting to take something by force or threat of force against the person, or assault significantly distinguished those youth who continued to offend. The study's findings are consistent with a number of studies (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Mullis et al., 2005) that have demonstrated that repeat offenders habitually commit a number of different antisocial acts, often having previous contact with the justice system and well-documented behavioural issues.

This study also found mental health factors to be significantly related to youth reoffending. Though data from the first stage of the study (Degusti et al., 2008) indicated that youth more seriously involved with the justice system were more likely to have very complex mental health issues (i.e., multiple diagnoses), tests of significance found that ADD/ADHD or FASD diagnoses were significantly related to repeat offending behaviour. Importantly, all of the youth with a diagnosis of FASD reoffended. This finding is reinforced by Mullis et al.'s study (2005), where 60% of their sample of chronic youth offenders were diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) or ADD at some point. Evidence is also building with regard to the relationship between FASD and criminal behaviour, with Turner and colleagues' (2007) study finding a significant link between chronic youth offending and this disorder.

## Family Factors Domain

The profiles of youth offending in Calgary told an important story regarding the influence of family factors among the sample of youth, particularly with regard to living arrangements, family breakdown, and family violence. The literature has also consistently reported the ill-effects of family violence and breakdown on children and youth and its relationship to youth offending (Arnull et al., 2005; MacRae et al., 2008; Mullis et al., 2005; Turner et al., 2007), and increasingly, the impact of involvement with children's services (Ryan, 2006; Ryan, Hernandez, & Herz, 2007). A recent study of a cohort of over 50,000 youth in British Columbia conducted by the British Columbia Representative for Children and Youth and the Provincial Health Officer (2009) revealed

that youth in care are more likely to be arrested and placed in custody, and more likely to be in the youth justice system than to graduate from high school.

Findings from the current study are largely consistent with what has been reported in the literature. Though the profiles (MacRae et al., 2008) indicated noticeable differences between study groups with regard to living arrangements, tests of significance with regard to reoffending confirmed that those youth who do not live with both parents were significantly more likely to reoffend, which is consistent with previous findings (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Howell, 2009). Variables representing family disruption and breakdown, including contact with child welfare, history of foster care or residence in a group home, and running away, were associated with reoffending, consistent with studies conducted in the U.S. and U.K. (e.g., Arnall et al., 2005; Tyler, Johnson, & Brownridge, 2008), and the recent study conducted in British Columbia (British Columbia Representative for Children and Youth and Provincial Health Officer, 2009). Surprisingly, however, family violence and neglect were not significant factors associated with reoffending, despite being a distinguishing family characteristic among the original study sample (MacRae et al., 2008) and a common risk factor reported in the literature (e.g., Arnall et al., 2005; Stewart et al., 2008). However, one limitation of CRILF's data on family violence and neglect is that it was not collected by self-report, but rather from the probation file review; it was also the only family variable where the data were collected in this way. Though probation files often report this type of information, it is possible that violence or neglect may have occurred that was not discovered by the probation officer, or reported in the probation file. Further, youth who have longer histories with youth probation have more extensive background investigations and probation files. Therefore, any youth with shorter probation histories (i.e., One-time offenders and perhaps some Chronic offenders), may not have that kind of information reported in their file. Additionally, the sample of Gateway youth did not have probation file information, and therefore were not included in the analysis of family violence. Thus, the data on family violence and neglect may not be a true reflection of its incidence among the study sample.

### Peer Group Factors Domain

The original profiles of youth offending (MacRae et al., 2008) revealed noticeable differences among the study groups with regard to their social life, with more serious offenders having been more likely to associate with negative and older peers, have gang affiliations or membership, and be less likely to participate in pro-social activities. These patterns are consistent with the literature, particularly with regard to the relationship between gang affiliation and chronic offending (Benda & Tollett, 1999; Howell 2003; Trulson, Marquart, Mullings, & Caeti, 2005). Examining the significance of gang affiliation in relation to reoffending among the study sample further confirmed this link, with having been a member of a gang, or most importantly, having friends who are gang members, being significantly associated with reoffending. When examining the literature, it is notable that the factors in the individual, family, school, peer, and community domains that place a youth at risk for gang involvement are often the same factors that place a youth at risk for chronic offending, and that these factors often have a cumulative and interactive effect. In addition, having friends who are older was also

found to be a significant predictor of reoffending, which is consistently reported in the literature on both chronic youth offending and gang involvement (Howell, 2009).

With regard to extracurricular activities, though participation in organized activities, sports, and clubs/groups with adult leadership was not found to be significantly associated with reoffending, participating in lessons in dance, music, or hobbies or other non-sport activities was found to be a protective factor significantly associated with a decrease in the probability of reoffending. This speaks to the importance of investment in pro-social activities.

### School Factors Domain

It is well-established in the literature that school difficulties are often associated with criminal behaviour among youth (Arnull et al., 2005; Mullis et al., 2005). These findings are consistent with previous findings from the CRILF study, which demonstrated noticeable differences in school successes among the study sample, particularly with regard to suspensions, dropping out, and investment (DeGusti et al., 2008; MacRae et al., 2008). In the current study, a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD was found to be a significant individual factor related to youth reoffending, but would also have a significant impact on school performance and success; this finding was confirmed by Mullis et al. (2005). The analyses of school-related factors further confirmed that behaviour issues such as suspensions from school, being bullied in school, getting in fights at school, and having taken a weapon to school were all significantly associated with reoffending. These significant and notable behaviour and learning issues speak to the importance of the school as a point of prevention and early intervention.

### Community Factors Domain

Finally, for the purposes of this report, the researchers looked further into community factors that were associated with youth reoffending, given indications in the literature that neighbourhood/community factors such as the availability of weapons and drugs and the presence of crime and violence were significantly related to persistent offending (Chung et al., 2002; Patterson et al., 1992). In this study sample, whether the youth carried a weapon and whether gangs were present in the community were significantly associated with reoffending, which is consistent with findings in the literature. However, the literature also suggests that community factors, when mediated by parental supervision and discipline, are not significant predictors (Patterson et al., 1992); further, Turner and colleagues (2007) suggest that community factors often interact with other factors to place a youth at risk for reoffending. Though the CRILF data were not sufficient to test these effects, the impact of the community environment is clear.

Table 5.1 presents a summary of the significant risk factors in each domain.

**Table 5.1  
Summary of Significant Risk Factors for Reoffending, by Domain**

<b>Domain</b>				
<b>Individual</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>Peer Group</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Community</b>
Diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*	Contact with Child Welfare Services*	Friends belong to a gang*	Ever taken a weapon to school*	Ever carried a weapon in the community*
Ever used illegal drugs	Ever run away from home*	Involved in lessons or other non-sport activities*	Ever been in fights at school	Gangs in community
Ever bought illegal drugs	Live with both parents	Age of closest friends	Ever been suspended from school	
Ever sold illegal drugs	History of foster care	Ever been a member of a gang		
Broken into a house	History of residence in a group home			
Stolen a car or motorcycle				
Taken/trying to take something by force/threat of force				
Assaulted/hurt someone				
Assaulted/hurt someone with a weapon				
Assaulted/hurt someone on Calgary Transit property				
Diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder				

Sources of data: Police Information Management System, Youth Offender Interview , Youth Probation File Review .

\* Best predictors of youth reoffending within each domain.

## Factor Combinations

Though factors in isolation may be found to be significantly associated with youth reoffending, the literature has increasingly pointed to the fact that a combination of a number of factors and their interactions may better predict chronic or persistent youth offending (Chung et al., 2002; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998; Turner et al., 2007), particularly when their influence at various stages of development are examined. Though the current data did not allow for a developmental analysis, the significance of both the number of risk factors present and the presence of factors in multiple domains was considered.

Not surprisingly, the likelihood of reoffending increased with the number of risk factors present in the youth. Youth who reoffended had significantly more risk factors present than non-reoffending youth. However, another important finding was that youth who reoffended also had a greater number of risk factors in more domains than youth who did not reoffend, with most youth who reoffended having risk factors in all five domains. Consistent with the literature, youth who reoffended not only had many factors suggesting risk for reoffending, but these risk factors manifest in many areas of their life. This theme is maintained when considering which factors in each domain best predict youth reoffending. As shown in Table 5.1, for the current sample of youth, a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD is the best individual predictor, contact with child welfare services, particularly when a youth has run away, was the best family factor, having friends who are gang members, in combination with not having participated in non-sport activities, hobbies or lessons, was the best peer predictor, having taken a weapon to school was the best school predictor, and finally, carrying a weapon in the community was the best community predictor. When considered together, the combination of all risk factors paints a picture of complex youth who lack stability, support, and structure, and who require a great deal of specialized service.

### 5.2.2 Conclusions

The results of CRILF's follow-up study of 123 youth with varying degrees of involvement in the justice system make a valuable contribution to the literature given the longitudinal nature of the data. The followup data were somewhat limiting in that the youth could not be reinterviewed and therefore the researchers did not know how their individual, family, peer, community, and school situations may have changed. However, knowing whether youth had continued contact with the Calgary Police Service allowed this study to suggest which factors are most vital for stakeholders to address, permitting more targeted prevention efforts and more effective interventions for youth already involved in the justice system. Given that youth who reoffend manifest risk factors in a number of domains of their life, schools, families, community agencies, and children's services are in a special position to identify youth at risk and initiate support.

Future Canadian studies would benefit from following in the path of recent U.S. studies (e.g., Haapanen et al., 2007; Howell, 2003; Mullis et al., 2005; Ryan et al., 2007), which have closely examined the developmental stages at which certain characteristics begin to manifest, or significant social events (e.g., family breakdown,

family violence) occur in order to develop more targeted and effective prevention and intervention programs.



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