

BAID

**Young Women's
Empowerment Project**

ENCOUNTER

LINE

2012

A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

DENIED HELP!

How Youth in the Sex Trade & Street Economy
are Turned Away from Systems Meant to Help Us
& What We are Doing to Fight Back.



Shout outs

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to all young people who do what they have to do to survive every day. The world may call us victims but we know differently. We know we are our own heroines. This work is personal to us. It is about our lives.

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About YWEP

The Young Women’s Empowerment Project (YWEP) is a member-based, social justice organizing project for girls, including transgender youth, and young women ages 12-23 who have current or past experience in the sex trade and street economy. Our mission is to offer safe, respectful, free-of-judgment spaces for girls impacted by the sex trade and street economy to recognize their hopes, dreams, and desires. The goal of our work is to build a movement of girls with life history in the sex trade and street economy so that we can unite and fight back.

YWEP is youth run. This means our staff comes from our membership and is almost entirely between the ages of 12-23. YWEP defines a member as any girl or transgender girl who is currently or formerly involved in the sex trade and/or street economy, is under 23, and who attends at least one membership meeting per year. We do workshops all over Chicago and the country. We also reach 500 girls per year through our peer to peer outreach and an additional 100 through our syringe exchange. Our Youth Activist Krew and Girls In Charge work to deepen their political education and make decisions for our project—including building our base, hiring staff, and creating our campaigns. We also do research, which we will talk about later in this paper.

Our Leadership Development

YWEP is based off our leadership ladder and our membership base. Our Leadership ladder works like a cycle. Members come in through our weekly Girls in Charge meeting, this is our base. Girls in Charge is responsible for reaching consensus on important decisions in the project, as well as interviewing board members. Girls come from all over Chicago and have different backgrounds, but YWEP is where we can come together. Receiving stipends for their work, they spend most of the group learning about the movement, resilience, and sisterhood.

After attending four Girls in Charge meetings, they are eligible to be in our outreach worker training. Our outreach worker training is roughly 56 hours and is growing all the time. During the summer, the training takes place for 4 to 8 weekends depending on how we schedule it. By the end of the training, girls are knowledgeable and are a resource to our constituency. They are paid for the entire training and most are then hired as outreach workers. These outreach workers are paid for two and a half hours of outreach per week. Once girls are at this level, they can apply for internship opportunities and can work for 8 hours a week. Interns can move into staff positions, and youth are always moving up.

As an entry level staff person your job title is "Leader." At this level, some co-facilitate groups and work on developing curriculum and workshops. Others are intensely involved in research and the administrative work. Whatever the main focus in the Leader's job

description will be their main focus when they are promoted to Coordinator positions with more responsibility. For example, if they were co-facilitating now they would be the facilitator. And the ladder repeats itself and a new Leader would move up, and then the new coordinator would be supervising her. The highest level on our leadership ladder is Co Executive Director. Our first young person to move all the way up the ladder and become the Co Executive Director is Dominique McKinney. She became the Co Director in January 2009 and is in charge of running our site and programs.

Our Values

YWEP's values vary and run deep in all of our work, daily and annual alike. From self care to harm reduction, to popular education, and empowerment theory—our model is based around the idea that we believe girls are the experts in their own lives. Many times, girls are taught that they don't know what is best for them: A doctor knows what is best for her health, a social worker knows what is best for her emotional health or a judge knows what is best for her-period! At YWEP, we strive to create spaces where girls are in charge. A place where girls are knowledgeable about these systems and the harm they can cause. Institutional violence is when a system causes harm or someone who is part of a system causes harm. We don't tell girls what to do, we don't give advice and adults don't take control of youth-led projects. We create as many opportunities as possible for girls to be in leadership positions and adults DO NOT do all the important work and DO NOT make all the important decisions. Being empowered means that girls are active in the decisions they make about their lives. At YWEP we give girls skills to become active in their lives, by

involving them in leadership development as much as possible and by educating them about their rights, their money and their options.

We bring social justice into our work by acknowledging and supporting resistance.

Resistance is any way you fight back and resilience is any way you heal from violence. We value the rebellion of girls impacted by the system. We encourage girls to look closely at the way things like racism, classism, sexism, transphobia, and homophobia play out and affect girls involved in the sex trade and street economy. We understand that the sex trade is not about one person but about a system of things that all work together to oppress youth; women; people of color; LGBTQGNC (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and gender non-conforming) people; and others, too. We offer education and support to girls so that they can begin to unpack what social justice means to women and girls involved in the sex trade. To some girls, this might mean working for rights, to other girls this might mean working to abolish the sex trade and to other girls it might mean both. One way that we incorporate social justice into our daily work is by working to build community. We do this by helping girls find connections with each other, by looking closely at how we might play out sexism (like by calling girls “ho’s”) and by creating a respectful, free of judgment space where girls can get information about how to change the world.

Another one of YWEP’s strong values, but also a tool, is Popular Education. Popular Education is a way of talking about ideas that helps to get people thinking critically about issues so that they can act together as a community to address inequalities and injustices.

At YWEP we strive to expand our knowledge about each other and about the stories of social justice movements—our stories about our experience in foster care might sound like someone else’s story too. When we share our stories, we can find common ground to work together to resist and fight back.

Our Research



The Young Women’s Empowerment Project released a report in September of 2009 called **“Girls Do What They Have to Do to Survive: Illuminating Methods Used by Girls in the Sex Trade and Street Economy to Fight Back and Heal.”** This research is unique because it is the only study that we know of that was

developed and conducted by girls and trans youth, ages 12-23, in the sex trade and street economy. It’s also the only report we know of that focuses on the resilience and resistance of girls involved in the sex trade and street economy. The full findings of this participatory action research study can be found at www.youarepriceless.org.

Social justice for girls and young women in the sex trade means having the power to make all of the decisions about our own bodies and lives without policing, punishment, or violence. Our community is often represented as a "problem" that needs to be solved or we are portrayed as victims that need to be saved by someone else. We recognize that girls have knowledge and

*expertise in matters relating to our own lives that no one else will have. **We are not the problem—we are the solution.***

Why we started this research: We decided to do this research to show that we are not just objects that violence happens to—but that we are active participants in fighting back and bouncing back. We wanted to move away from the one-dimensional view of girls in the sex trade as only victims and look at all aspects of the situation: violence, our response to the violence, and how we fight back and heal on a daily basis. We build our community by figuring out how we can and do fight back collectively and the role of resilience in keeping girls strong enough to resist.

Our research shows that girls in the sex trade face harm from both individuals and institutions. Nearly all the research we could find about girls in the sex trade only looks at individual violence. Many people seem to think that more institutions or social service systems is the solution. YWEP agrees that institutions can be helpful at times, but we also wanted to show the reality that we face: every day, girls are denied access to systems due to participation in the sex trade, being drug users, identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, or being undocumented. We know institutions and social services can and do cause harm in our lives. We present this research to show that the systems that claim to help girls are also causing harm. We want to show that girls in the sex trade are fighting back and healing on their own—within their communities and without relying upon systems.

Girls in the sex trade fight back against the institutional violence we experience. With the data we collected, we discovered that girls face as much institutional violence (like from police or the Department of Child & Family Services) as they do individual violence (like from parents, pimps, or boyfriends).

We wanted to show how girls bounce back and heal from individual and institutional violence. We wanted this information so that we can collectively build a social justice campaign to respond to broad systemic harm. From this, YWEP's first youth developed, led, and analyzed research project was born.

Our research questions were:

1. What individual and institutional violence do girls in the sex trade experience?
2. How do we heal/bounce back from this violence?
3. How do we resist/fight back against this violence?
4. How can we unite and collectively fight back?

We answered these questions using 4 tools: we did focus groups with our membership and outreach workers, we created a fill in the blank zine so that girls could document the ways they heal and fight back, we used ethnographic observation by paying attention and writing down the experiences of our outreach contacts, and we asked new questions in our workshops about how girls take care of themselves and avoid violence.

Our Findings:

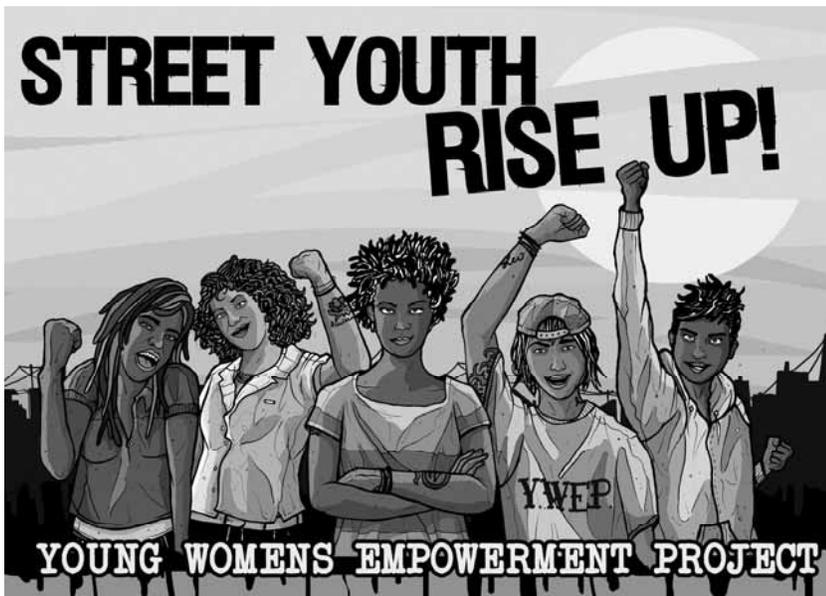
We had three main findings:

1. Institutional violence made individual violence worse. This means that when girls experienced things like rape or assault and then tried to get help, systems often did more harm to us. An example of this is a girl not being believed or a girl being arrested when she is trying to file a report for rape.

2. We are DENIED HELP from institutions both passively and actively. This means that some systems are set up to fail us because they are too complicated or because we are simply told that we cannot access help because we are involved in the sex trade or street economy.

3. Resilience is a stepping stone to resistance. This means that the more we take care of ourselves or heal, the more we have the power to fight back. We heal through breaking isolation and building community, by soothing ourselves with art, meditation, reading, baths and more. We fight back and resist violence by building critical awareness and recognizing that oppression plays an important role in our experiences. We fight back by speaking out and standing up for ourselves and our community. Harm reduction is a life philosophy that we use to resist violence. It's more than just using a condom—it means learning to put our safety and healing first. We saw over and over again that girls are excited and inspired about making changes and practicing self care. We now have proof that unconventional resilience methods are a stepping stone to resistance.

Our Campaign: Street Youth Rise UP!



our community.

After we compiled our findings we reached out to our allies at the Ruckus Society and Detroit Summer to help us translate our research into a campaign that would improve the quality of our lives. We wanted to use our findings to make real changes in

We named our campaign STREET YOUTH RISE UP! Our goal is to change the way Chicago sees and treats homeless, home-free, and street based youth who do what they have to do to survive. Our campaign comes from our 2009 research findings which discovered that young people are being denied help from helping organizations based on their involvement in the sex trade and street economy, because they are homeless, and because they are of color and/or LGBTQNC. Our research also found that resilience is a stepping stone to resistance. We created our campaign to build our resilience and resistance to institutional violence.

Street Youth Rise Up has four components:

1. **Healing in Action:** We support our resilience with Healing in Action, which trains us in herbal first aid and self exams so we know what to do when we can't get to a

doctor. We use reproductive and healing justice values to educate ourselves and our community about taking care of own bodies through alternative methods such as self exams, Chinese medicine, evidence-based herbal first aid and acupuncture.

2. **Bad Encounter Line:** This tool is for young people to report encounters with helping organizations so that we can identify and educate those providers (explained more below).
3. **Media:** We turned the research and campaign work into zines, advocacy tips, and music tracks. We have also been working on a computer game called “Getting to know the Game” which helps people understand the reality of how our lives are impacted by institutional oppression and system harm.
4. **Chicago Street Youth in Motion (CSYIM):** A group of young people from across Chicago come together to hold institutions accountable who are denying young people help.

What is The Bad Encounter Line (BEL)?

The BEL tracks what systems are denying us help and what youth are doing to get their needs met. The BEL data gets turned into a zine 4 times a year and we share the information with our community. The BEL also feeds into our task force called Chicago Youth in Motion. This is a citywide gathering of street youth of all genders that meets once per month to figure out how to make social services and systems respond to us.

How and why we developed the Bad Encounter Line

The Bad Encounter Line was developed in response to the research. In the research, we saw that girls were facing tons of violence every day, and the highest number of them came from institutions. Everyone collectively knew that we wanted to find ways to fight back, and the idea of warning girls and making a form that girls could share how they fought back was one of our first goals. We use the BEL as a way to warn youth about experiences with institutional violence. The goal is to inform youth and strategize ways to use harm reduction with institutions if they still need services. This process can also help youth find other ways to take care of themselves without needing to use institutions. We use the information from the data to guide our campaigns that directly help change the way systems work.



Figuring out how to get the information from the youth and making it available to everyone was a big issue. Because our outreach workers reach so many girls, we thought it was best to start there and think of ways they could spread and collect the information.

We held group meetings and focus groups to discuss the type of information we wanted to collect and what questions would give us the best information and not overwhelm anyone that filled in a BEL form. We used a lot of insight from previous booklets we created such as

the Girls Fight Back Journals and the outreach worker booklets. We knew it was important to keep questions simple but also give thorough explanations and examples.

How the BEL Works

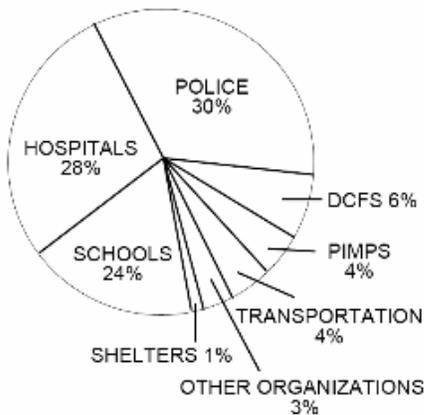
A youth can either pick up a form that is available at YWEP, they can go to our website to fill it out online, they can call us and leave us a detailed voicemail, or they can get a booklet from one of our outreach workers. After they finish filling out a form, they give it back to the outreach worker or give it back to any YWEP staff member. Naima Paz then records all of the collected data into a spreadsheet. After this step, she breaks down each story into summaries of the event. These summaries are what get posted inside the zines that are then created and distributed to different youth organizations and handed out to youth. Zines are created and distributed four times throughout the year while booklets are filled out and collected at all times.

We do workshops teaching other organizations and young people about how to use the BEL form and what the purpose of collecting this data is about. It also gives us a chance to collect more bad encounters from a group of people we might not regularly encounter. Everyone at YWEP has played a role in making the BEL happen. The outreach workers bring bad encounter line forms to their contacts and bad encounter line forms are filled out during Girls in Charge and the Youth Activist Krew.

We collect bad encounter booklets at all times. We get them through phone calls, booklets, or even online. We collect them during any of our groups or open time. We use the data to

be better prepared to know what our constituency needs and what areas of the city or which social services specifically are denying us help. The BEL helps us narrow down and focuses our task force's plans so that we can directly affect and change how institutions treat us.

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORTS IN TOTAL FOR ALL 3 ZINES



This pie chart shows the amount of reports collected on these institutions. There was 127 reports in total.

What are the findings from the BEL?

Main Findings

- Bad Encounters are increased when 2 institutions work together. They use rules that set us up for failure.
- Bad Encounters are increased when social services and institutions rely on Police and Security Guards.

- Youth in the sex trade and street economy experience institutional violence from healthcare providers almost as often as from police.
- LGBTQNC youth of color experience the highest percentage of Bad Encounters.

Resilience Main Findings

- Young people are standing up for themselves, filing grievances when possible, and calling friends and co workers for support and solutions.

- Young people get involved by going to city council meetings, board meetings, filing complaints with the Independent Police Review Authority, and getting other young people to do the same.
- When necessary, young people use violence to protect themselves from attackers and leave the situation to avoid escalating it further.

The overall finding is that systems are failing our youth in high numbers. It also showed a gap in Reproductive Justice work within the City of Chicago. Since September 2009, our BEL has collected a total of 146 reports for the year. The race to deny us help between police and healthcare has gone on since the BEL started. The April 2010 Bad Encounter Line zine showed that our constituency is denied help from social services and health care providers such as hospitals, clinics, police, and the Department of Human Services based on our involvement in the sex trade. One year later, in April 2011, our BEL data showed us that *girls in the sex trade and street economy experience institutional violence from healthcare providers almost as often as from police.*

The institutional violence reports were defined & broken down into the following categories:

Police: This category includes the Chicago Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This category also included police officers and security guards in schools.

Healthcare: This category includes all Chicago area hospitals, clinics, dentists, therapy/mental health services, and psychiatric facilities.

Schools: This category includes high schools, alternative schools, learning centers, GED programs and colleges in the Chicago area.

Shelters: This category includes emergency shelters, transitional living programs, youth-specific shelters, and some adult shelters.

DCFS: The Department of Children and Family Services includes case workers, group homes, & foster care settings.

Transportation: This category includes the Chicago Transit Authority's bus and train lines as well as taxis in Chicago.

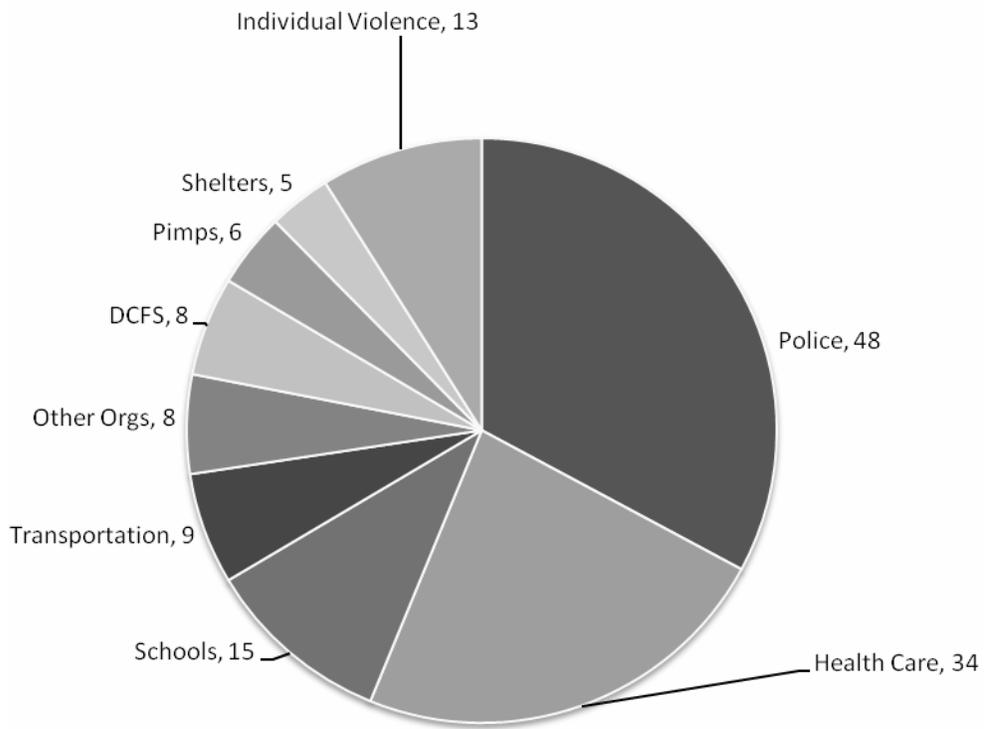
Other Organizations: This category includes other organizations and non-profits that are set up to help homeless youth. This also includes hotlines based in Chicago.

Pimps: This category includes people that are setting up dates or controlling a person's money or housing for people in the sex trade.

Individual Violence: This category was created because some people have institutional power in a young person's life even though they do not work for a specific organization or nonprofit. 99% of these reports were about Johns.

There were 142 reports naming 146 Bad Encounters with the system. This chart shows how the data broke down.

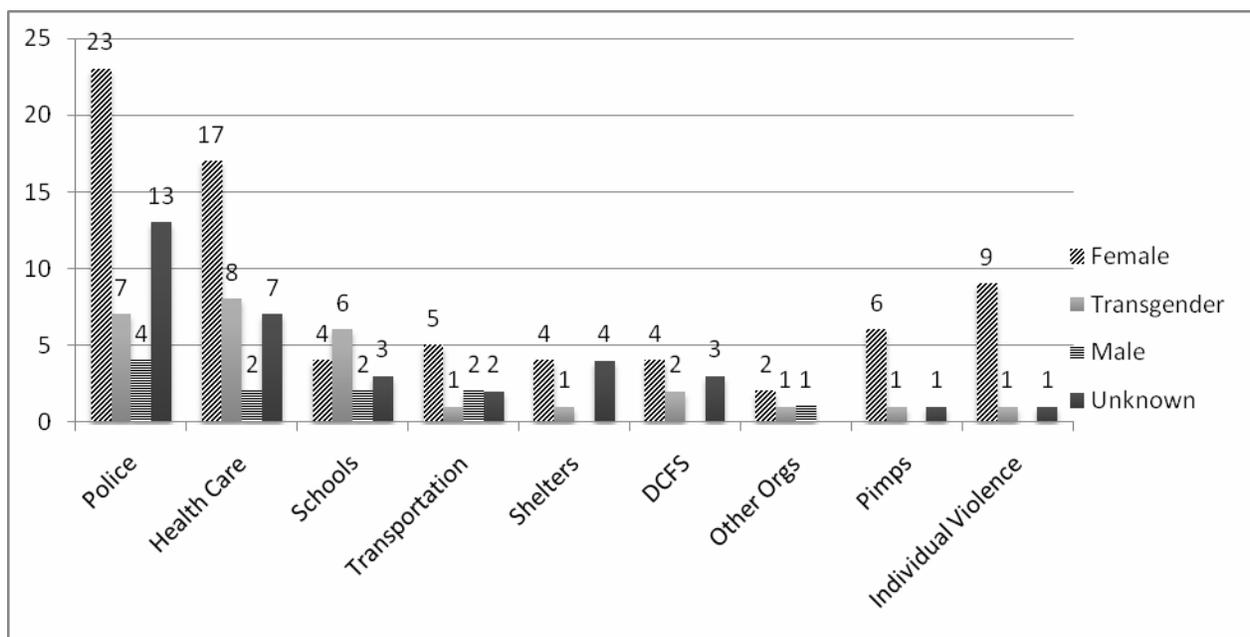
Bad Encounters Since September 2009 = 146



Of the 146 total reports:

- 73 identified as female
- 27 identified as Transgender, Genderqueer, Gender Non-Conforming, or Intersex
- 11 identified as Male
- 31 were unreported

This charts show how **gender** played a role in Bad Encounters:



Although there were only 27 reports made on the BEL by Transgender, Gender Non Conforming, Gender Queer and Intersex youth, they made up a disproportionate amount of particular categories. **25% of all reports about Hospitals came from Transgender, Gender Non Conforming, Gender Queer and Intersex youth and they made up 25% of all reports about Police. A shocking 40% of all reports about schools came from Transgender, Gender Non Conforming, Gender Queer and Intersex youth and they accounted for 37.5% of all reports about the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).**

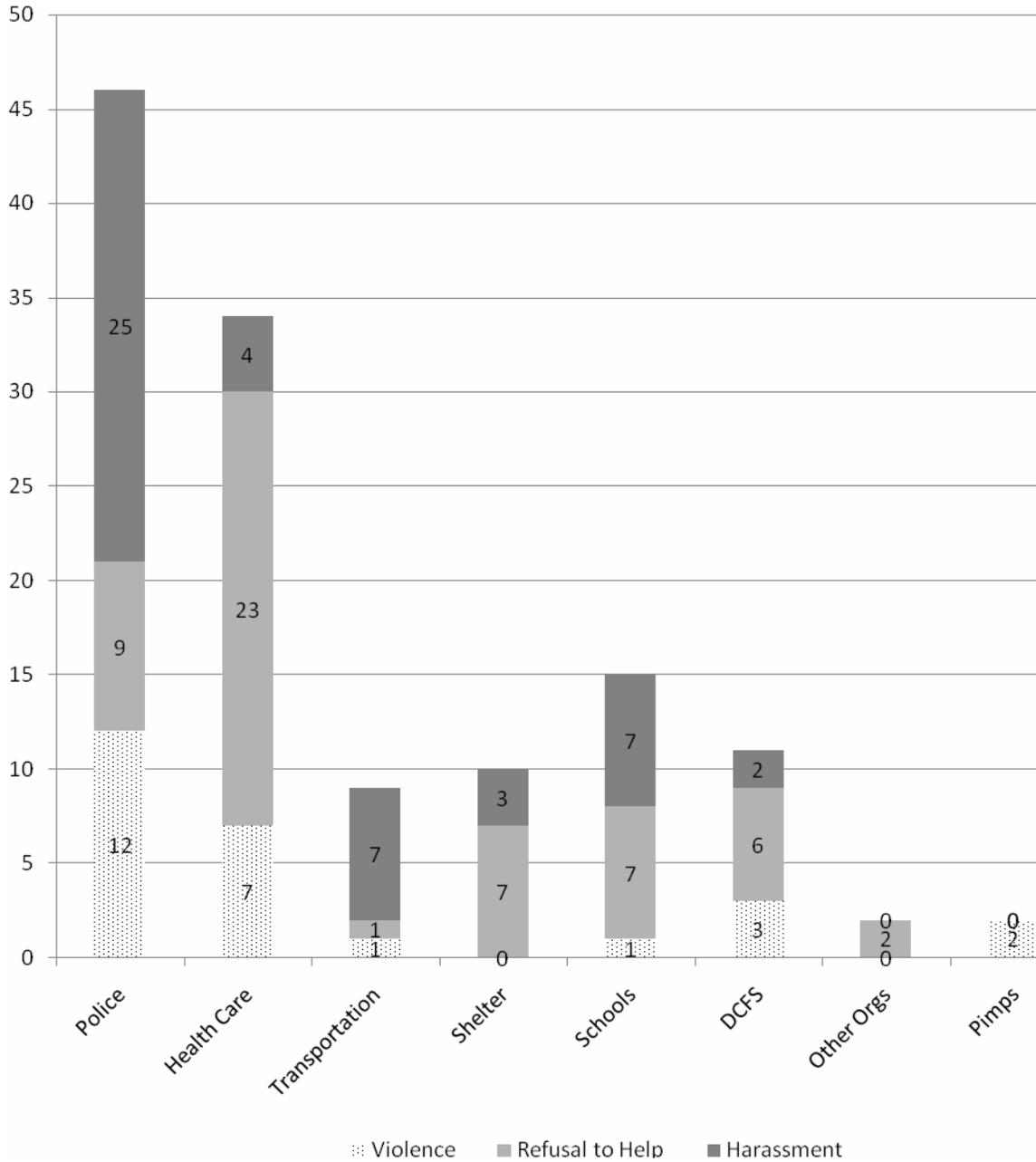
Young people experienced Institutional Violence in the following ways:

Violence: We noted violence when someone reported physical harm in any way by an institution or a person working for the institution. For example, if a nurse hit someone. This category also includes sexually abuse.

Refusal to Help: We noted Refusal to Help when we saw that young people were getting turned away for unjust reasons from institutions, when we were not given the proper care or attention, or were not referred or assisted in any way. This can also be institutions ignoring a young person asking for help.

Harassment: This was noted when a young person reported that they were being singled out or were persistently being verbally abused. This category was also noted when an institution created an unpleasant or hostile situation. We saw this frequently in hospitals or clinics when nurses or doctors would call young people “stupid” or judged them for “having too many sexual partners.”

The chart below shows how each institution was harmful to our constituency as reported by young people who completed the BEL forms (total number of reports by type of harm).



Our top two institutional violence reports:

Police and Healthcare

From the beginning of our BEL process, people making reports identified healthcare and police more often than any other encounter. We did expect that police would be a leading cause of Institutional Violence but, after 3 months of collecting the BEL data, we had the largest number of reports for healthcare. When going through each BEL report we found the most common bad encounters were (1) young people being refused help and (2) violence perpetrated against youth when seeking services. This violence was caused by staff in social services, police, security guards or city workers (like bus drivers, etc).

The healthcare system is an institution set up to help people, or at least there to help someone find the help they need from another resource. The data reflected that young people were getting turned away for unjust reasons and were not getting referrals or assistance in a way to help them take care of themselves. We have strong evidence to show that health care systems were choosing to turn away youth when they had the ability to help. The reason young people were turned away from help is complicated. We found distrust of youth, prejudice, racism, ageism, sexism and homophobia and transphobia as contributing factors. For example, we heard a story of a young person being told they couldn't be treated in a hospital emergency room because they were in drag. We also heard stories like this one *"I went to a clinic [not a hospital] and asked to see the doctor and she [the receptionist] asked to see my ID. I gave it her and it had my chosen name on it. She looked at me funny. So I said "I am a woman... don't I look like it? And my name clearly says*

it.” She smirked and started whispering with her co workers who laughed at me and started whispering with other patients in the waiting room... so everyone heard what was going on. I felt embarrassed and tried to turn the conversation back to the reason I came in for. The receptionist told me I couldn’t see the doctor because the emergency room was too full. So basically she said I couldn’t get treated because they were confused by my gender...”

Young women in the sex trade are extra vulnerable to experiencing a bad encounter when they are pregnant or when they are giving birth. We heard many stories of procedures happening without consent like this one: *“After 24 hours in labor my sister gave birth to a boy. After delivering the Med Student on duty came in to clean her up and help with the afterbirth. Without asking for permission, she stuck her hands inside my sister and started doing a procedure that was extremely painful. She didn’t acknowledge the pain she was causing. She treated her like an animal.”* We heard so many stories of young women losing custody of their children immediately after giving birth. Most of the time this, this happens because the hospital staff would call DCFS if the young person did not list a father’s name on the birth certificate and were between the ages of 12-24. Here is one story like that: *“After I gave birth to my daughter, the nurse asked me for the father’s name to write on the birth certificate. I said I didn’t want to put one down. She got an attitude with me and the next thing I know DCFS [Department of Chicago and Family Services] showed up and started asking me all these questions about my sex life and my housing and everything. Before I knew it my child was out of my custody and I am now fighting to get him back. The social worker thought I was in the sex trade and called me a prostitute!”*

“The Rules”

Another reason young people were not receiving help from health care systems is “THE RULES.” Basically, “THE RULES” are set up to protect the system from getting into trouble. Most of the time, “THE RULES” turn young people away. We hear a lot of examples of hospitals using psychiatric treatment as a threat and punishment that pushes young people away from the help they needed. Here are some examples: *“I went to the hospital because I was assaulted. After being there a day I wanted to leave to talk to my counselor. They wouldn’t let me leave and said if I left against their advice they would put me in the Psych ward.”* The hospital’s rules prevented a young person from getting the help she needed to heal after an assault. This story also shows how rules can hurt young people: *“I was brought to the hospital by the Loop for a stab wound. They knocked me out because I didn’t want care and found a lot of scars which led them to believe I was being abused. I woke up to them doing a rape kit on me. They sent me to the Psych ward for not wanting help.”* Another story we hear about all the time is similar: *“I went to the hospital because I had an STD. They noticed cuts on my thighs from where I had cut myself [self injury]. They put me in Psych because they said I was sexually crazy for having too many partners and hurting myself and never gave me any antibiotic for my STD infection.”* The hospital’s rules made it so that the young people who went there for help wound up in psychiatric services. The system refused to help them for the reason the young people went for help and basically made these young people scared to ever go back to the hospital again.

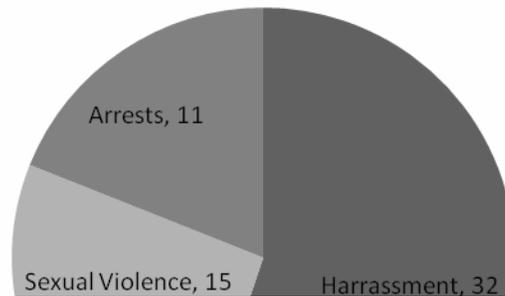
“The Rules” were responsible for 9% of the total Bad Encounters reported

We also heard of this happening with Shelters and Foster Care. When you stay in foster care, they are supposed to give you things like bus fare and food. We hear stories about how young people don't get these items. This story isn't from a BEL report but is one we hear all the time at YWEP during group meetings *"I did bad on my test in school so they took my bus card away from me. I couldn't get to school so I got in trouble and wasn't allowed to leave my group home so I lost my job. Now I need money for a bus card and I need to make up my home work and find a new job."*

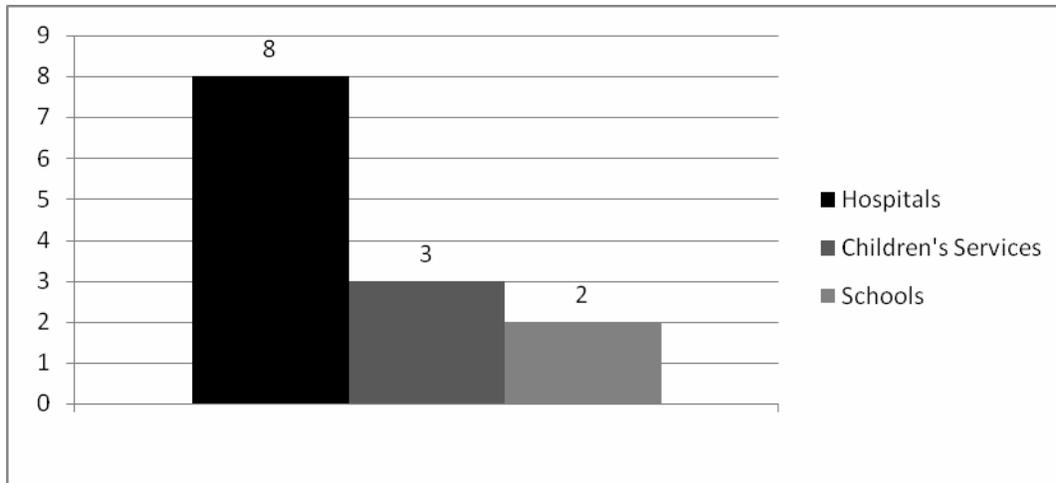
These examples of how "THE RULES" are failing us also show how we might need to be involved in the sex trade and street economy in order to get what we need to survive and take care of ourselves. NO RULE should EVER force a young person to make these kinds of hard choices to survive, make them homeless, or leave them without MEDICAL HELP.

In the final month of collecting data, police totaled up to being our most frequently reported institution. In our research, we weren't finding stories of youth getting arrested for doing illegal activities, but police were found often to be unnecessarily harassing youth. These reports show police going out of their way to target our constituency. Our data shows police do illegal things to young people and young people know that police must be feared. This belief is essentially Refusal to Help because why would you ask for help from someone you were afraid of?

Police Bad Encounters Breakdown



The other big theme is two institutions working together to create a bad encounter. In over 40% of the encounters about Police another institution was involved. Many times hospitals, schools, and DCFS call the police—or the police were already located inside the school, hospital or social service and were activated. Other times police would take a young person somewhere—like the hospital or foster care against their will. Many times adults think that taking a young person to a hospital or social service is what the police should do. But most of the time, these young people are running away from these settings because they are being physically, emotionally or sexually harmed or neglected. When the police return the young person to the hospital or foster care setting, they do not address the reason the young person was running away in the first place. Young people can be arrested and charged with “Running Away” but institutions are never held accountable for why we run.



The chart above shows rates of Police working with Institutions

Here is an example of the police and a hospital working together to scare a young person away from getting help: *“I got hit on the head by someone on the train. The police took me to the hospital. The hospital tried to put me in the psych ward because I was transgender. They said I couldn’t leave the hospital even though I didn’t want to stay. They called the policeman back in to try to force me to stay because they said I was a minor. I went to the bathroom then hid and left before they got there.”* This young person never got the medical help they needed because they were scared of being put in a psychiatric facility and because they experienced discrimination based on their gender.

We also saw many themes of police sexually assaulting youth because of their gender, sexual identity, or lack of ability to fight back or for being in the sex trade. We heard many stories about police officers trading sex in exchange for not arresting young people—but arresting them anyway. Here is an example: *“I was solicited by a police officer who said that if I had sex with him he wouldn’t arrest me. So I did. Then afterwards he cuffed me and pressed charges any way.”*

Through this research we learned that it is technically legal – although generally not allowed by department rules –for a police officer to have sex with someone in the sex trade. It was explained to us by Andrea Ritchie at Streetwise and Safe (SAS) in New York City like this: *“There is no question that a cop can lie to you about whether they are a cop to get you to do something illegal. Ultimately, the purpose of undercover is to fool people into thinking that they are not cops. They can also do illegal things themselves if necessary to convince someone that they are not a cop or to get evidence that someone is committing a crime. So they cannot just buy, but also sometimes use drugs if they need to get evidence on someone. And technically it’s legal for a cop to engage in some sexual conduct to prove that someone agreed to have sex for money. And there’s lots of cases of cops demanding sex from people in the sex trade in exchange for not being arrested and sexually assaulting people while on duty, especially people who are in the sex trade.”* Here is a violent example of this happening: *“I was going to meet a new john, it turned out to be a sting set up by the cops. He got violent with me, handcuffed me and then raped me. He cleaned me up for the police station and I got sentenced to 4 months in jail for prostitution”.*

Here is another story that came up over and over of a transgender girl being harassed: *“I keep being arrested in Rogers Park just for standing still. They keep taking me in for prostitution even though I’m not doing anything at all. It’s the same white cop doing it too.”*

This example from police in schools was reported by an ally of a transgender student and shows how a bad rule harms transgender students every day: *“A transgender girl in my school was arrested by a police officer who works there for using the “wrong bathroom.” She had to drop out over the incident.”*

In some reports, police admit that they know young people cannot do anything about the violence because police know young people will not be believed. Police also came in with the highest tally of youth reporting violence. Based on reports, police are using force and violence to show their power. One story we heard shows this:

I was walking to the bus when a police officer called out and said, “Hey you, come here girl with all of that ass.” I ignored the comment unaware of where it was coming from until he pulled up on the curb to block my path in his undercover cop car. He jumps out and yells “Didn’t you hear me calling you girl?” I replied simply by saying, “No my name isn’t girl with all of that ass.” He got very mad and slapped me saying I was disrespectful and saying, “Don’t you know who I am?”...

Sexual Violence by Police Officers made up 11% of the total Bad Encounters reported by youth in the sex trade & street economy.

The story above (from our first BEL zine) leads to a sexual assault by the police officer. She goes to jail when she reports him.

What We Heard From OUR People Who DIDN'T FILL OUT A BEL Report

Like any research project, there will always be stories that don't get reported and because youth are afraid of putting their story out there for fear it will get them in trouble or make things worse. While YWEP has never and will never force anyone to tell their story, we often hear experiences young people are having during our group meetings or during one-on-one conversations. Even though many of the youth chose to fill out BEL's, we always heard many more stories of institutions wronging youth daily who chose NOT to fill out a BEL.

For example, we heard many more bad experiences with other organizations and non-profits, and many more experiences of hospitals and police refusing to help and inflicting violence. In fact, we were surprised to see so few reports about non-profits because young people talk about how terrible their experiences are with social services on a daily basis. We especially heard this about social services that have security guards onsite. At least once per week we hear about a security guard sexually harassing, assaulting or soliciting sex while working at shelters, clinics, drop-in programs and community centers. We are still thinking about why these stories are so hard to capture on paper.

Another theme we heard lots about was documentation problems. We hear about young people being asked for ID when there is no reason for it, or their ID being questioned because their gender presentation is different than what their ID states. We hear about

young people not being able to get ID because they are undocumented, transgender or simply do not have birth certificates and the documentation or parental support necessary to get the documents.

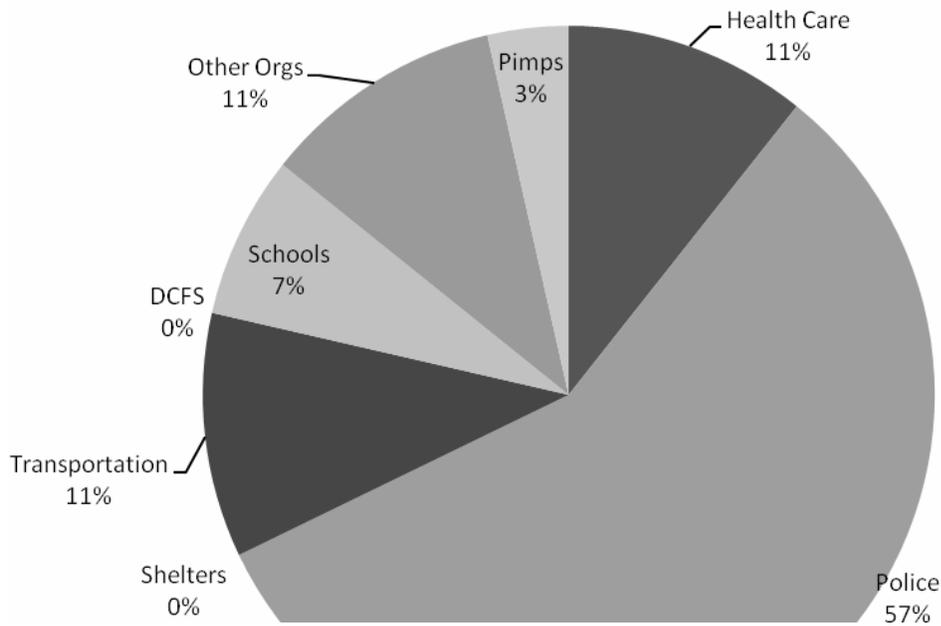
We also often hear how challenging and hopeless the different systems feel to youth. Over and over, we hear about what happens when systems fail or hurt us. It feels like there is nowhere else to turn for help.

We also know there were MANY more experiences with physical violence from police than were reported. Our guess about why so few people would write or file a BEL about police violence is fear. Even though the reports are anonymous, young people may not want to retell the story or may fear writing it down could lead to trouble somehow. When challenging large systems like the police in Chicago, young people don't feel like a report gives them a fair chance to fight the misconduct with any hope that justice will take place or that police officers will be held accountable.

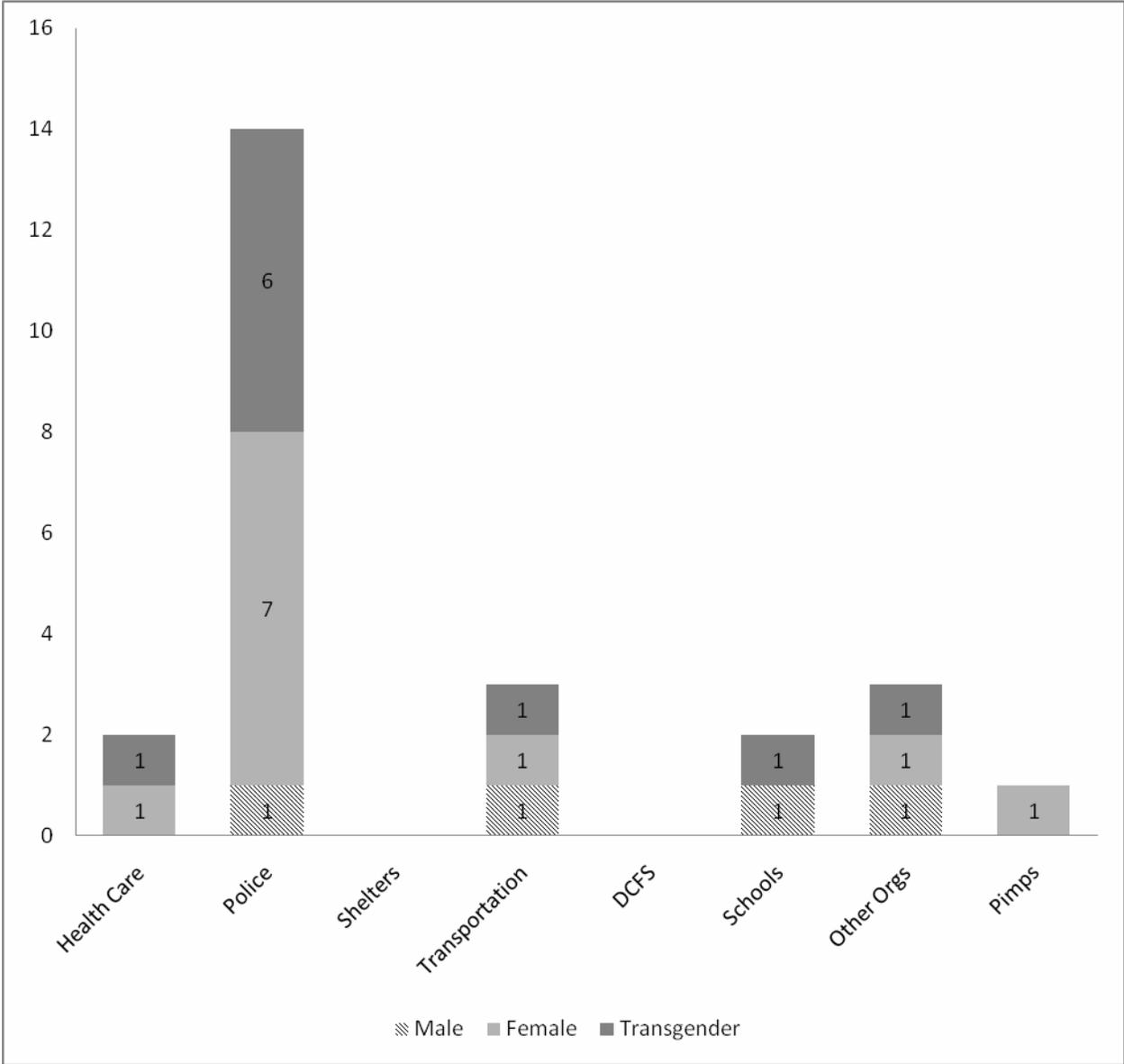
Our Top two reporting neighborhoods: Lakeview & Englewood

The number one and two neighborhoods reporting Bad Encounters were Lakeview and Englewood. We have included these graphs so you can see how the data broke down for these locations.

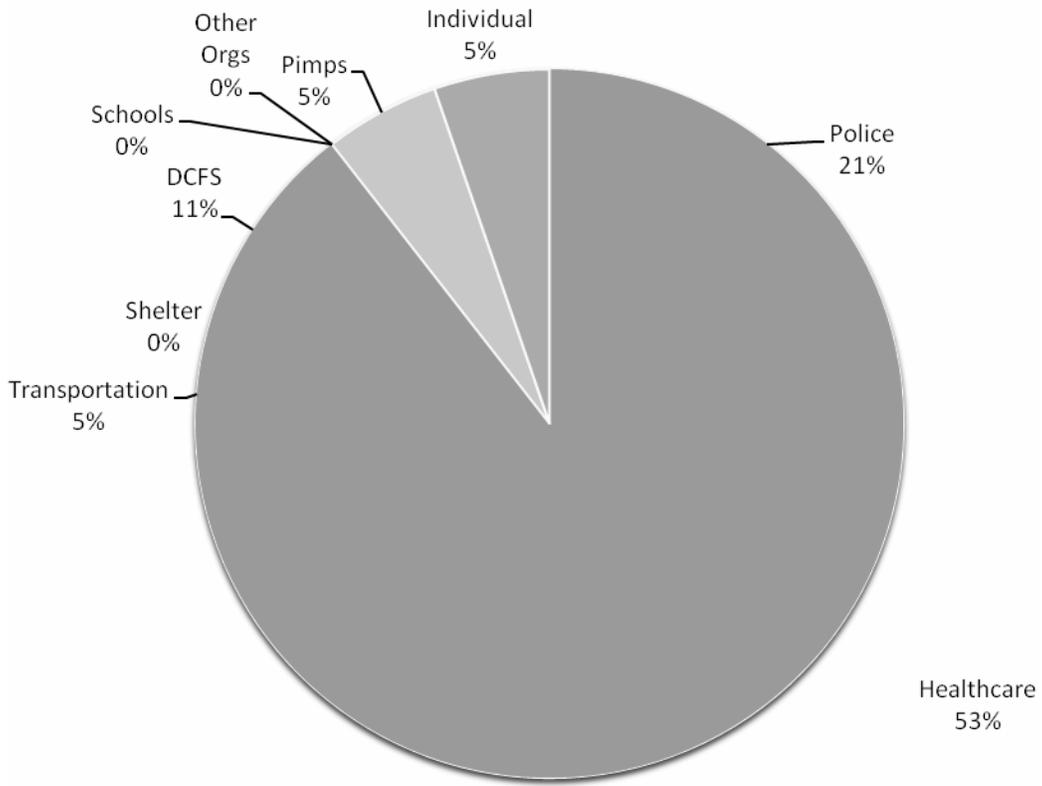
Total Bad Encounters Reported Lakeview = 28



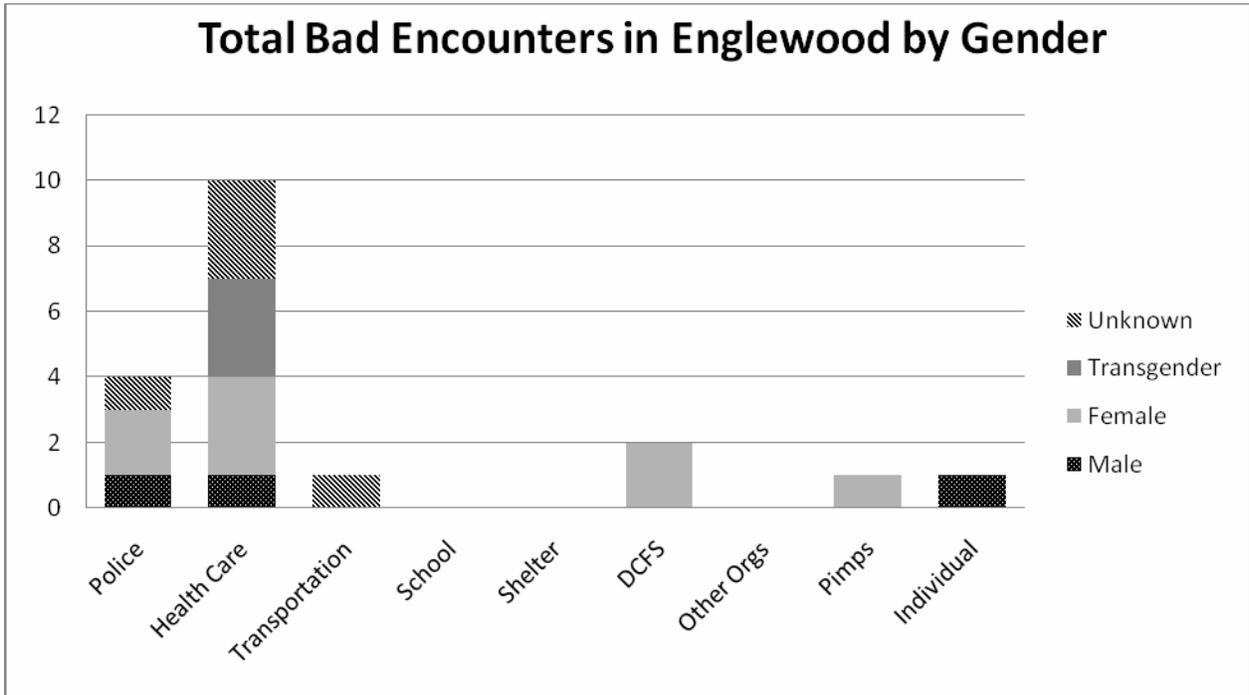
Total Bad Encounters in Lakeview by Gender



Total Bad Encounters in Englewood = 19



Total Bad Encounters in Englewood by Gender



Raw Data for the remaining Neighborhoods

Bad Encounters Reported in the Loop = 12

Institutions	Male	Female	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Police		2			2
Healthcare		7	1		8
Transportation					
Shelter					
DCFS					
Schools	1	1			2
Other Orgs					
Pimps					
Individual					
Total	1	10	1		12

Bad Encounters Reported in Humboldt Park = 5

Institutions	Male	Female	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Police		1			1
Healthcare				1	1
Transportation		1			
Shelter					
DCFS					
Schools			1		1
Other Orgs					
Pimps		1			1
Individual		1			1
Total		4	1		5

Bad Encounters Reported in Lawndale = 4

Institutions	Male	Female	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Police				1	1
Healthcare	1	2			3
Transportation					
Shelter					
DCFS					
Schools					
Other Orgs					
Pimps					
Individual					
Total	1	2		1	4

Bad Encounters Reported in Austin = 4

Institutions	Male	Female	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Police		1			1
Healthcare		1			1
Transportation					
Shelter					
DCFS		1			1
Schools					
Other Orgs					
Pimps					
Individual		1			1
Total		4			4

Bad Encounters Reported in Rogers Park = 3

Institutions	Male	Female	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Police	1		2		3
Healthcare					
Transportation					
Shelter					
DCFS					
Schools					
Other Orgs					
Pimps					
Individual					
Total	1		2		3

Bad Encounters Reported in Roseland = 3

Institutions	Male	Female	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Police					
Healthcare					
Transportation					
Shelter					
DCFS					
Schools			3		3
Other Orgs					
Pimps					
Individual					
Total			3		3

Bad Encounters Reported in West Town = 3

Institutions	Male	Female	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Police					
Healthcare					
Transportation					
Shelter	1	2			3
DCFS					
Schools					
Other Orgs					
Pimps					
Individual					
Total	1	2			3

Bad Encounters Reported in South Shore = 2

Institutions	Male	Female	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Police		1			1
Healthcare					
Transportation					
Shelter					
DCFS					
Schools					
Other Orgs					
Pimps					
Individual		1		1	2
Total		2		2	2

Bad Encounters Reported in an Unknown Neighborhood = 24

Institutions	Male	Female	Transgender	Unknown	Total
Police	1	3	1	1	6
Healthcare		3	1	1	5
Transportation					
Shelter		2			2
DCFS		1	1	1	3
Schools		1		1	2
Other Orgs					
Pimps		1		1	2
Individual		4			4
Total	1	15	3	5	24

More Stories From The Data

Young people reported stories about staff people being harmful to residents while they were staying in homeless shelters. Here are a few examples of this: *“I was staying at a shelter and talking to some of the workers there. One of them made a comment about my body/weight, stating that he would not be attracted to me if he was my age. I tried to stand up for myself to youth workers and other staff but I ended up getting discharged as a result”*.

This story was from another experience of a young person staying in a shelter: *“This place made me feel unsafe and created a generally very hostile, toxic environment while I was staying there to get off the streets. Staff were rude, asked for lots of personal information, yelled and shouted, wrote me up unnecessarily, talked about me and other residents behind our backs without disguising it very well. When I tried to talk to staff about my problems, they told me I needed to have better boundaries and not share things with them.”* The most frequent story we heard was one like this: *“I had been staying at the shelter for awhile, but when it was time for me to find a new shelter; they didn’t help me set up a new one in time. They did give me 3 other places to call, but they were all full or something and wouldn’t take me so I’ve been homeless because they wouldn’t help me find somewhere else to stay. I kept going back to the office before I had to leave to get numbers or something but we ran out of time before I got anything set up.”*

The BEL had a lot of stories about institutions working together to make it difficult for someone to receive the help they need. This was submitted by someone under 18 and involved in the sex trade: *“When being held in protective custody [because they said I was a*

victim of human trafficking] they started withholding my sheets, then towels, then pillows, then food because they said I wasn't telling them everything I could—when in fact I was. They also took my ID and paperwork I deserved...” We also heard lots of stories like this one, which are about two bad encounters with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and a hospital, too. It was submitted by someone over 18: *“I don't have insurance and went to the hospital to have my baby. They ended up taking my baby because they assumed I was in the sex trade because I didn't have a father to put down on the birth certificate. I am still fighting to get my child back.”* Here is another example of two institutions working together to create a bad encounter and an example of our research finding about how institutional violence makes individual experience worse. This was submitted by a young person under 18: *“I went to the hospital for a rape kit and when I got there the police officer accused me and my advocate of not cooperating. The officer starting yelling at us both and said that I was going to jail for lying. The officer never filed a report but called Children's Services and I got sent to a group home but nothing ever happened with the rape.”*

We will only have reproductive justice when Chicago institutions become accountable to the homeless and street based youth they are funded to help. To make this possible, we will continue our Bad Encounter Line to see how these service providers are helping us or not.

Resilience and Resistance: What young people do to fight back during a bad encounter

Our research shows that the more young people stand up for themselves and demand fair treatment, the less likely they are to be helped. Sometimes, standing up for yourself means that you actually get harmed even more. Especially with police and in health care settings, young people got into more trouble by advocating for themselves. Here is an example: *“A police officer said that if I had sex with him he wouldn’t arrest me. I didn’t want to. I got arrested.”* Or this example: *“I was brought into the hospital by the police because I was bleeding. The hospital kept using the wrong pronoun for me. I explained it to them over and over that I was transgender. I wound up in the psych ward because they thought I was crazy because I was trans....”*

Here are the key ways people fought back and some examples:

Young people are standing up for themselves, filing grievances when possible and calling friends and co workers for support and solutions. Here is an example from someone who was denied help in an emergency room because they are transgender: *“I did the best I could to complain to the head of the clinic and they said it would be looked into. I called many times. Later, I heard the lady [who refused me help] was fired but her license wasn’t revoked so she is still practicing somewhere else.”* This story was also really impressive: *“I got arrested for solicitation because I was leaning into a car window talking to my friend. I was not soliciting; I was just going to meet my friend at the bus stop. The police office said that I was a typical transgender prostitute stereotype! Then the public defender made a mistake in the court room. I asked everyone for help but no one wanted to help me so*

while court was in session I stood up and raised my hand and spoke up for myself. After that the charges were dropped. But the whole point is that I almost had a warrant and charges for something I didn't do."

Young people get involved by going to city council meetings, board meetings, reporting complaints to the Independent Police Review Authority, and getting other young to the same. Here is one example, *"One time I was in my PJ's getting the Tribune in front of my apartment where I lived with my friends. A police officer stopped and asked me for ID and where I lived. I pointed to my house and he said "we are just trying to keep the neighborhood safe." When I told my mom about it she said, "We don't want that kind of safe." I started going to city council meetings to challenge police racism in this town. I connected to other youth doing the same thing. I am going to do more."* We heard other stories of young people reporting on officers, bad social workers and clinics. Young people share this information with their peers. One young person put it like this, *"It not worth complaining or reporting how awful and discriminatory this place is. But I tell everyone else not go there for help and to find a better place because these people are discriminatory."*

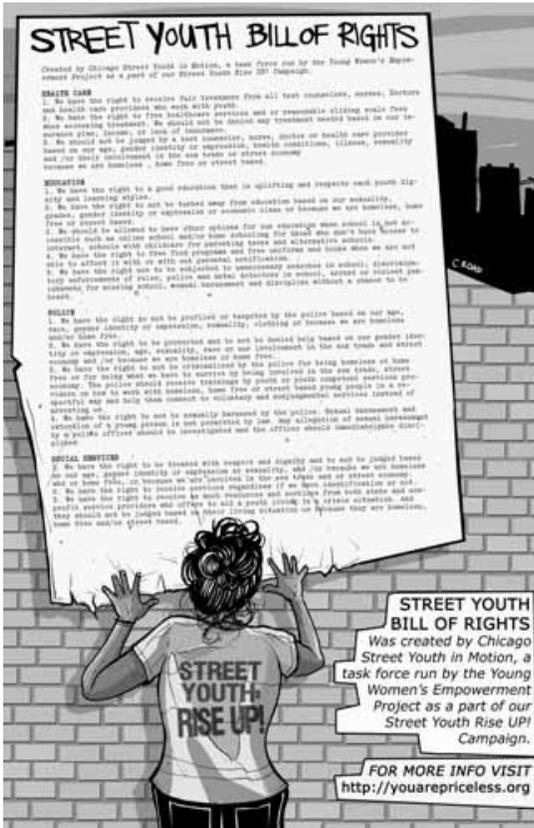
When necessary, young people use violence to protect themselves from attackers and leave to avoid making situations worse. For example, *"I was out on my front porch and a boy threatened to stab me. The police came and asked what happened. I told them I was threatened but the officer left me there. I ran away as fast as I could and now I carry a weapon on me at all times."* We were also really struck by this intense story, *"I was receiving a rape kit after a trafficking experience and the detective was questioning me and my advocate. The officer physically wouldn't let me out of the room. She threatened to send me*

and my advocate to jail unless we reported what happened [but I didn't want to tell her about my experience]. The officer got loud and in our faces, swore at us and made a big scene. I got between the officer and my advocate to get her out of my advocate's face. As soon as could, I ran out of the door but the officer grabbed my arm so I pushed away and hid until I could get out of the hospital."

How we are fighting back and healing: Research leads to Action

As oppressive and harmful as systems and institutions are to our constituency, our research reveals ways that young people fight back and take care of themselves despite this. Although there is a large sense of hopelessness with getting justice or help from institutions, young people reported how they took care of themselves after a bad encounter.

We saw very similar themes in young people taking care of themselves from our last research report ***Girls Do What They Have to Do To Survive***. Young people report that they take baths, work on art, take walks, write or do something they find relaxing, fun or distracting. We also got many reports that young people use their BEL report to take a stance against that institution and see the BEL as a way to help change things. Many young people report that since they couldn't take on the system on their own, they fight back by joining YWEP's taskforce Chicago Street Youth in Motion.



Our Collective Actions to Heal

YWEP outreach workers responded to the surprise that there was so much institutional violence from health care by writing and creating the UNIVERSAL SELF EXAM guide and workshop series with the help of Chicago Women's Health Center. We also wrote a zine called Healing in Action which has advocacy tips for going to the doctor, how to take care of yourself when you are going to the doctor, and what to do if you have a bad encounter. This zine also has health care information about how to take care of ourselves

with herbs and things you can find in the store when healthcare is not an option. We reached 200 young people with these guides and our workshops teach girls and transgender young people how to do their own self exams; use speculums; and do comprehensive chest, anal and testicular checks. We think this guide is the only one like it in the country and we distributed over 600 copies at the US Social Forum and the Allied Media Conference in Detroit during June 2010 and 2011.

The task force also created a Bill of Rights for Street Youth. We are currently reaching out to social services and organizations to sign on to this Bill so they understand our rights and are accountable to us. We are asking social services to follow our rights, make their

grievance policy accessible to youth, and display a poster of our rights. They must also have the Bad Encounter Line form available for youth whose rights were violated. We are also writing a curriculum to train social services about our rights and expect organizations to provide more staff trainings. We included the Bill of Rights at the end of this document.



Young Women's Empowerment Project also decided to create a CD that was written, produced and recorded by us. Invincible from Detroit came to Chicago over 3 different weekends and taught us how to write our own songs, lay tracks, record, and produce our album. We created this CD because we needed a different tool to express ourselves and reach our people with our

messages and research findings. Music is free and allowed us to express the emotion we feel about how things are impacting us. It let us have another outlet to describe how it feels to be criminalized and neglected. On the inside cover of our CD, we added this explanation about the title, *"This is not just a CD title, this is a Movement! This is not just a statement, it is a Need! For a roof over our heads! For fresh water for our bodies!!! Food in our bellies! Basic Necessities! Which have been denied to us by these "helping systems"! Continually numbering us, not knowing us! We desire tools, to take care of our bodies!!!! And you restrict us, because we are here without!! Maybe without parents, identification, or funds? But does that mean we don't deserve, or are we less than? Well, since Survival of The Fittest seems to be all America's about. WE have decided continuing to just fight with you just won't do! So we our finding our*

own alternatives, because we will make it through! The harder the system pushes, we push back! STREET YOUTH RISE UP!!!! We are claiming what's OURS!"

The CD making was a very healing process for us and our members. It gave us an opportunity to speak on issues we normally can't address out right. It also gave us an opportunity to speak on what we need from institutions and how we have managed to survive without the help of these systems. Powerful and motivating, this CD comes straight from our hearts and lives, an insider's view to what it takes to survive.

We also decided to take direct action to show our collective power to institutions and let them know the street youth are ready to rise. We marched on September 30th, 2011, to announce that, although we are capable of standing on our own, we demand accountability from these helping systems. We will no longer be called the problem when WE ARE continually denied what we need!

NEXT STEPS FOR HEALING AND FIGHTING BACK

After the march, our taskforce continued to meet and acts as the body to hold these institutions accountable. For organizations who already signed on to the Bill of Rights, the task force will be the group who addresses them if they come up again in our Bad Encounter Line. We will continue to collect BEL's as a voice for the young people and to track the effectiveness of our campaign.

We will also continue to hold YOUTH IN ACTION STATIONS where we can act as the resource when systems fall short. Providing food, hygiene supplies, and a place were young people feel safe and supported. We will also continue with our HEALING IN ACTION

campaign by creating our own herbal remedies for those moments when health physicians and western medicine cannot be reached. This furthers our goal to heal our own community.

Words to Know:

a. **Sex Trade:** YWEP defines the sex trade as any form of being sexual (or the idea of being sexual) in exchange for money, gifts, safety, drugs, hormones or survival needs like housing, food, clothes, or immigration and documentation—whether we get to keep the money/goods/service or someone else profits from these acts. The girls that we know have a wide range of experiences in the sex trade. Some of us have been forced to participate, some of us have chosen to participate in the sex trade, some of us have had both kinds of experiences. Sometimes, this can be by choice but we can also be forced into the sex trade by someone else. There are many ways that girls can be involved in the sex trade and we believe that our experiences, though all uniquely different, are united by the way we experience the intersections of misogyny, racism, classism, transphobia, and homophobia. Others feel that the question of choice is irrelevant or more complicated than choice/no choice.

b. **Street Economies:** The street economy is any way that girls make cash money without paying taxes or having to show identification. Sometimes this means the sex trade. But other times it means braiding hair, babysitting, selling CDs/DVDs, drugs or other skills like sewing and laundry. We say street economies because there is more than one kind of economy playing out on our street at any given time. These economies are complicated.

c. **Empowerment** means having the tools and resources you need to live the life you want. To reduce the sex trade to one girl's experience, or to make blanket statements about the sex trade based on some girls' experiences, good or bad, is to disempower and erase the realities of girls whose experiences are different. Girls in the sex trade are members of many communities, including the ones we create with each other for support and survival. Empowerment means the ability to make community, to make change, and to make decisions.

d. **Home free:** this means that we have a right to decide our housing options. Some girls feel like living on the street or leaving their housing behind is empowering. We respect all girls' right to choose where and how they get shelter.

e. **Street-based:** this means the corner or the block is your home base.

f. **Violence:** YWEP uses the term violence to mean any kind of harm that can happen to a girl in the sex trade. It can include, but is not limited, to physical violence, emotional violence, abuse, or threats. For example, being kicked out of a shelter because you are using drugs is a form of violence because you are being denied your right to safely sleep indoors.

g. **Individual Violence:** Refers to any violence that happens from one person to another, such as a parent, boyfriend, or pimp. An example of individual violence is a girl's sister punching her.

h. **Institutional Violence:** Refers to any violence from an institution or agency, such as DCFS or the police. An example of institutional violence is DCFS refusing to give you the benefits you are entitled to receive.

i. Resilience: Resilience refers to the ways we bounce back or heal. Some forms of resilience are personally soothing like aromatherapy, medicinal drug use, bubble baths, or food. Other forms are about connection – hanging out with girlfriends, reading books about the movement, or educating younger girls about how to protect themselves.

j. Resistance: We use the term resistance to mean any way of fighting back. It can mean avoiding violence by taking another way home or educating yourself and the youth in your neighborhood about your legal rights.

k. Harm Reduction: Harm reduction means any positive change. We do not force anyone to stop participating in any risky behavior. Instead, we work with them to come up with options that work for them to stay safer when engaging in that risky behavior. We apply this to the sex trade, but also to any other high risk behavior as well. Harm reduction means practical options, no judgment, and we respect choices that girls make.

l. Transformative Justice: Transformative justice is a model that acknowledges that state systems and social services can and often do create harm in the lives of girls.

Transformative Justice supports community-based efforts for social justice beyond the government or other state-sponsored institutions. This means that we do not work on making new laws or policies because we don't believe that the law can bring fast and positive change to ALL girls in our community. Instead of following models for social change that talk about us without including us, we seek to create a movement for social justice that recognizes and honors our talents as leaders and innovators with us at the forefront.

m. Participatory Action Research (PAR) This is a way to involve the whole community in research. it relies on us as the experts and not an outside researcher. We shape the way our story is told. PAR leads to action because it moves us to identify and respond to the things we learn about ourselves and find our own solutions to the problems we face.



Street Youth Bill of Rights

Created by the Chicago Street Youth in Motion Task: A task force organized by the Young Women's Empowerment Project

This is an endorsement letter to have your organization sign on and become an ally of The Street Youth Rise Up Campaign.

The campaign is led by the Young Women's Empowerment Project to change the way Chicago sees and treats homeless, home-free and street based youth who do what they have to do to survive!

Our campaign comes from our 2009 research findings which discovered that young people are being denied help from helping organizations based on their involvement in the sex

trade and street economy, because they are homeless, because they are of color and/or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, Transgender, and Gender Non-conforming (LGBTQNC). Our research also found that resilience is a stepping stone to resistance. We created our campaign to build our resilience and resistance to institutional violence.

Street Youth Rise Up has four components:

1. **Healing in Action:** Using reproductive and healing justice values to education ourselves and our community about taking care of own bodies through alternative methods such as self exams, Chinese medicine, evidence based herbal first aid and acupuncture
2. **Bad Encounter Line:** A tool for young people to report encounters with helping organizations so that we can identify and educate those providers
3. **Media:** We are creating music, art, games and zines to educate and inspire our constituency, allies and larger community
4. **Chicago Street Youth in Motion (CSYIM):** A group of young people from across Chicago who have come together to hold institutions accountable who are denying young people help.

The Street Youth bill of Rights was created by The Chicago Street Youth in Motion Task Force (CSYIM) to demand that our voices be heard and that we are treated with respect and dignity in the choices we make to survive.

The best way to support is by signing on to the street youth bill of rights (listed below) and having your organization endorse the campaign.

Health Care

1. We have the right to receive fair treatment from all test counselors, nurses, Doctors and health care providers who work with youth.
2. We have the right to free healthcare services and or reasonable sliding scale fees when accessing treatment. We should not be denied any treatment needed based on our insurance plan, income, or lack of insurance.
3. We should not be judged by a test counselor, nurse, doctor or health care provider based on our age, gender identity or expression, health conditions, illness, sexuality and /or their involvement in the sex trade or street economy because we are homeless , home free or street based.

Education

1. We have the right to a good education that is uplifting and respects each youth dignity and learning styles.
2. We have the right to not be turned away from education based on our sexuality, grades, gender identity or expression or economic class or because we are homeless, home free or street based.
3. We should be allowed to have other options for our education when school is not accessible such as online school and/or home schooling for those who don't have access to internet, schools with childcare for parenting teens and alternative schools
4. We have the right to free food programs and free uniforms and books when we are not able to afford it with or without parental notification.
5. We have the right not to be subjected to unnecessary searches in school;

discriminatory enforcements of rules, police and metal detectors in school, arrest or violent punishments for missing school, sexual harassment and discipline without a chance to be heard.

Police

1. We have the right to not be profiled or targeted by the police based on our age, race, gender identity or expression, sexuality, clothing or because we are homeless and/or home free.
2. We have the right to be protected and to not be denied help based on our gender identity or expression, age, sexuality, race or our involvement in the sex trade and street economy and /or because we are homeless or home free.
3. We have the right to not be criminalized by the police for being homeless or home free or for doing what we have to survive by being involved in the sex trade, street economy. The police should receive trainings by youth or youth competent services providers on how to work with homeless, home free or street based young people in a respectful way and help them connect to voluntary and nonjudgmental services instead of arresting us.
4. We have the right to not be sexually harassed by the police. Sexual harassment and extortion of a young person is not permitted by law. Any allegation of sexual harassment by a police officer should be investigated and the officer should immediately be disciplined.

Social Services

1. We have the right to be treated with respect and dignity and to not be judged based on our age, gender identity or expression or sexuality, and /or because we are homeless and or home free, or because we are involved in the sex trade and or street economy.
2. We have the right to receive services regardless if we have identification or not.
3. We have the right to receive as much resources and services from both state and non- profit service providers who offers to aid a youth living in a crisis situation. And they should not be judged based on their living situation or because they are homeless, home free and/or street based.

What does it look like to endorse the campaign?

We are asking institutions and organizations who support our work to endorse the Street youth Rise Up Campaign. By endorsing the campaign you agree to be held accountable to the following requirements.

1. The institution and or organization must have a clear grievance process that is accessible to young people and or use the street youth bill of rights as tool to improve your way of working with and supporting young people.
2. The staff and youth leaders of the institution and or organization must be open to attending our street youth rise up accountability trainings.
3. If a young person is seeking resources through your organization and or institution and does not meet your requirements in order to receive those resources. Then the

institution and or organization must provide support necessary to obtain other resources. (example: bus fare, I. D. referrals, etc.) The institution will assist that young person until they have received those resources.

4. Host meetings at your space when possible or help us find accessible youth friendly space for us to meet.
5. Provide resources when possible such as food.
6. When possible, donate youth friendly hygiene supplies and clothing donations.
7. Ask individuals/staff in your organization sing on to the Bill of Rights.
8. Support, endorse or offer feedback about direct action mobilizing for the campaign
9. Distribute information and resources related to our campaign within your organization and among young people.
10. Help us hold a fundraiser by endorsing or publicizing our event.
11. Hang up Bill of Rights Posters (provided by YWEP) in your space.
12. Handing out Bill of Rights, Bad Encounter Line Reports and Chicago Street Youth in Motion information to young people who access your space.

If your organization wants to become an ally and feels that this is something you can commit to please sign below.

YWEP Bad Encounter Line

This is a graphics free version for online use. If you would like to use the original print version, please contact our office.

The Bad Encounter Line was designed by the Young Womens Empowerment Project. YWEP is for youth involved in trading sex for money, gifts, drugs, or survival needs, like food or a place to stay for the night. Some examples are exotic dancing, escorting, or street based sex trade. The sex trade can also mean that someone is forced into it. Some examples are trafficking, or being forced by parents or pimps.

A bad encounter is a negative experience with institution or system, such as DCFS, health care, police, hospitals, schools, or any other institution.

Violence can look like verbal, physical harm, emotional harm, or threats.

The Bad encounter Line is a way to warn youth about the bad encounter you experienced.

It can also be a way to tell other youth how to fight back. Talking about how you fought back is important, it shows that youth in the sex trade can and do fight back! It also gives other youth ideas on how to fight back. We are our own best resources.

The Bad Encounter Line is for youth involved in the sex trade. Give The Bad encounter to the original person who gave it to you.

What pronoun do you prefer/please describe your gender?

What institution caused the violence? Like police, hospital, DCFS, health care, pimps, etc.

Try to be as specific as possible by using the institutions name for ex. Grand and central police station, Saint Elizabeth Resurrection Hospital, etc.

What other describing information can you give? Like the police car number, badge number, names or description of what they look like, etc.

Where did this event occur? What city? What neighborhood? Give as much information as you can.

What day did this event occur? Try to use a specific date, or guess as close as possible.

What time of day did this event occur?

Describe the event as best as you can. What happened? Ex. I was raped and I called the cops, they accused me of lying about being raped and refused to help me. They told me if I called again, I would be arrested for making a false report. It occurred around Fullerton and Central, Austin community Chicago. The cops' last name was Berkowitz, he wouldn't give me his badge number so he was tall and thin with a crew cut and dark hair, he had a scar under his left eye, his left ear had one cartilage piercing, he looked to be around 40 and Latino.

Did you fight back? If so how? Fighting back can mean anything, like running away, calling friends to help, tricking him/ her physically fighting, anything.

Thank you for your amazing information. If you would like more information about the Bad Encounter Line, or more info about our programming, please call us at 773-728-0127, or email us at info@youarepriceless.org

