

# The Youth Are Speaking...

THE RYSE  
CENTER'S  
LISTENING  
CAMPAIGN



## VISIONARY



A VISIONARY HAS PASSION.  
PASSION SPARKS THE URGE TO  
ORGANIZE AND MAKE CHANGES  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY.



## GAME CHANGER



TO BE A GAME CHANGER IT  
TAKES PERSEVERANCE AND  
A GREAT SENSE OF  
CREATIVITY.

## LEADER



TO BE A LEADER IN THE FUTURE-  
YOU MUST TAKE CHANCES. EXPECT  
SET BACKS. ORGANIZE, PLAN, & GAIN ALLIES.  
LEADERSHIP IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT.

CA School Based Health  
Alliance Conference  
2016



# Building Beloved Community

“Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Be kind and gentle (with y/ourselves and each other)
- Trust y/our feelings, mind y/our reactions
- What is said here stays here
- What is learned here leaves here
- When we disagree, we get curious
- When we agree, we stay curious
- Let's try to laugh together a few times





# Grounding Reflection



- Spend some time quietly reflecting on your experiences as an adolescent
  - What were your formative experiences?
  - Who and what were your key influences?
  - What was your environment like?
- When you are ready, please answer these two questions
  - What are the three most prevalent feelings you would use to describe that time in your life?
  - What do you feel like you needed from adults in your life?

*RYSE creates safe spaces grounded in social justice that build youth power for young people to love, learn, educate, heal and transform the lives*

contribution in their own way.



# Current Conditions



- Many young people in Richmond grow up exposed to tremendous stressors bearing the burden of multiple, correlated health inequities.
- Chronic exposure to trauma, violence, and stress is highly associated with long-term, chronic health & public health burdens (ACE Study, 2006).
- Emerging research on trauma and adolescent development inform opportunities for better-informed policies, practices, and investments.



# RYSE Listening Campaign

Framing and Methodology

# Defining Trauma

- What is trauma?
- What does it look, feel, sound like?





# Listening Campaign Goals

- (1) Understand the lived experience of Richmond youth burdened with multiple forms of violence and trauma
- (2) Inform effective community interventions & empowerment strategies
- (3) Create more empathetic & accurate assessment & response processes for youth healing from trauma







# Guiding Questions

1. What types of violence and trauma exposure do young people identify, highlight, and prioritize?
2. What are the expressions of distress amongst youth exposed to violence?
3. What strategies of coping and support do young people utilize to increase their resilience or post-traumatic growth in the face of chronic trauma exposure?
4. Where do youth need more support from adults and systems providers? What type of support helps most?

# + Methods: process of data analysis

Three researchers engaged in open & focused coding of surveys

- Open coding of surveys
- Initial focused coding to identify categories and connections

Community  
Conversations  
Surveys (n=368)

Reflection process with youth & adults community workers

Focus Groups &  
Targeted Interviews  
(n=65)

- Focused coding of focus group transcripts & category refinement
- Further refinement through constant comparison with interview transcripts

- Identify and interpret linkages between categories
- Define theories of change where relevant
- Present initial results for community feedback & further analysis

Study Results

Constant comparison between data to clarify categories and emergent linkages + one independent coder

*The first act of love is to listen. – P. Tillich*



# Findings and Offerings

Themes and Learnings



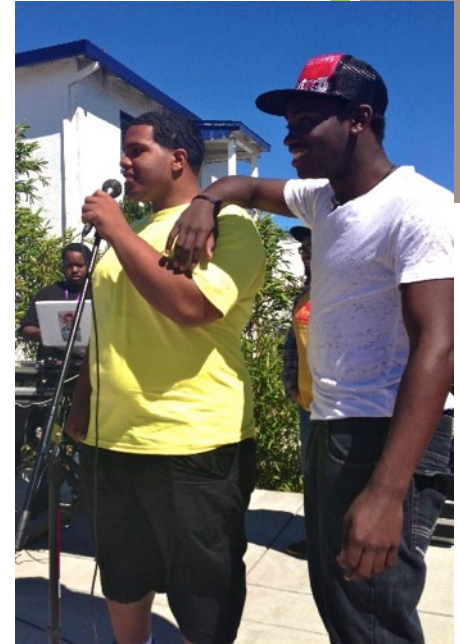
# Key Themes

## Trauma is...

- Pervasive, assumed, and multi-dimensional
- Organized through silencing and shaming
- Experienced with adults as unempathetic, judgemental, and punitive

## Primary Coping Strategies

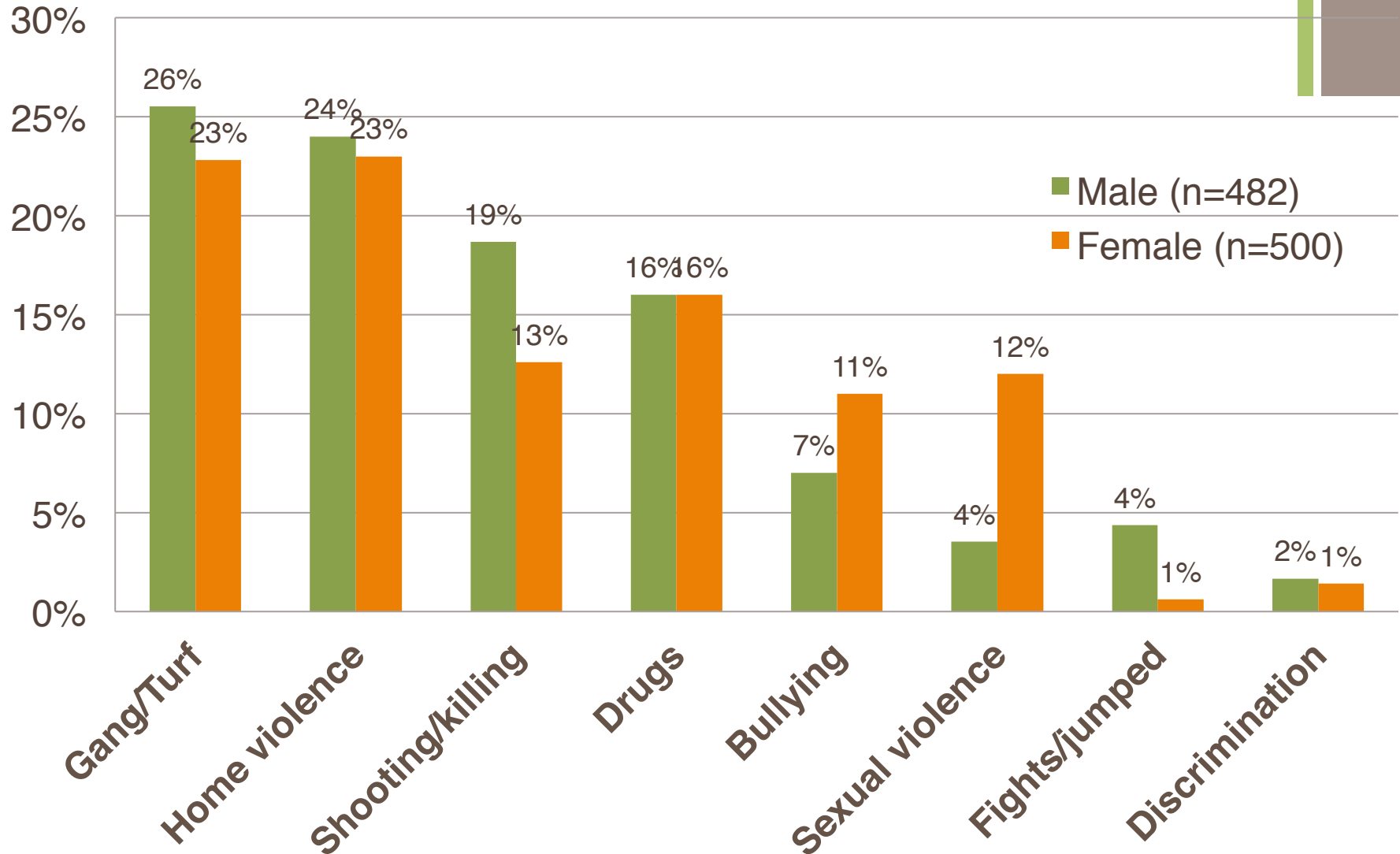
## Youth Want & Need





### (3) Most Impactful Forms of Violence

gender aggregated descriptive survey results





**“My experience with violence is very brutal...**

**I grew up with violence as if it were my sibling.”**

***-Angela Vargas, 14  
(photo by Karen Tobar)***



# + How does violence impact young people?



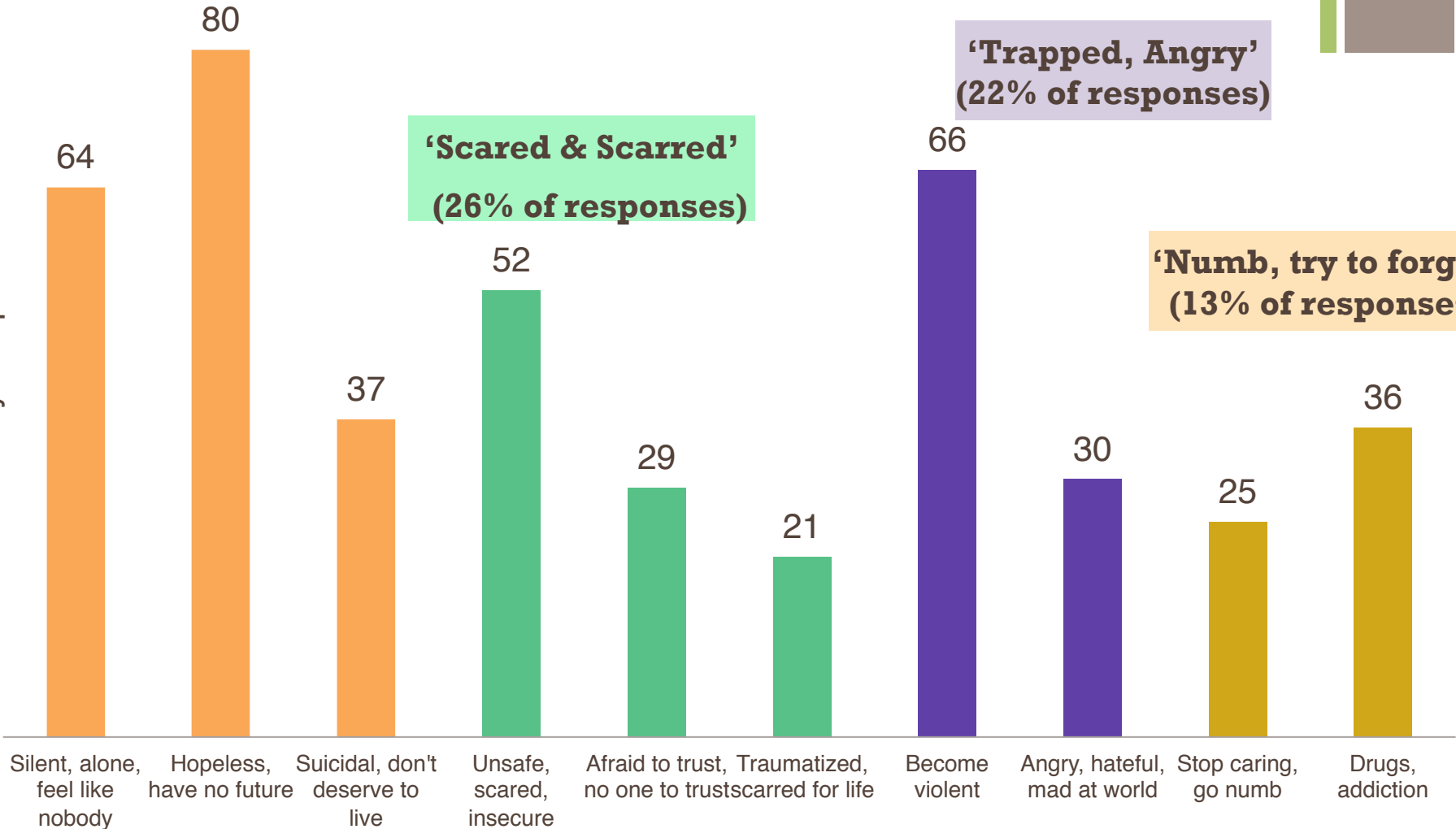
**'Hopelessness'**  
(39% of responses)

**'Trapped, Angry'**  
(22% of responses)

**'Scared & Scarred'**  
(26% of responses)

**'Numb, try to forget'**  
(13% of responses)

Coded Survey Response Rate

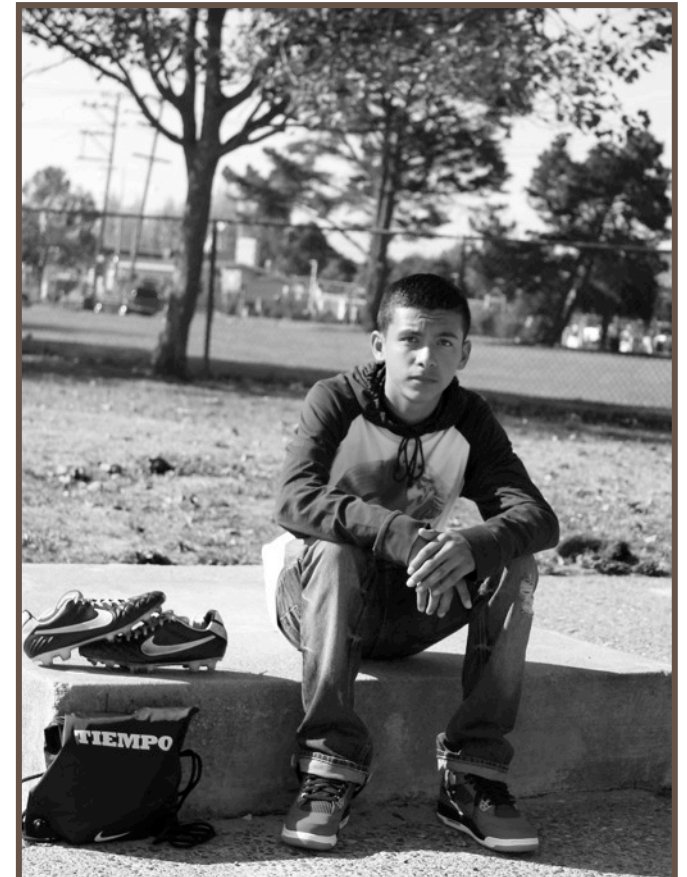




Young people deal with a lot of stress, responsibility, isolation, and lost love ones. Makes young people feel cautious, guilty, alone, angry, and sad.

**‘The most impactful form of violence we suffer is silence.’**

**It makes them want to hurt whoever hurt/killed the person they knew/loved. It makes them angry and sad about everything**





# Key Themes

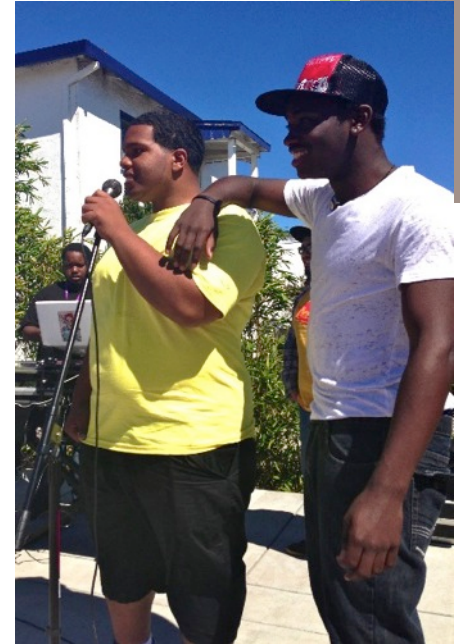
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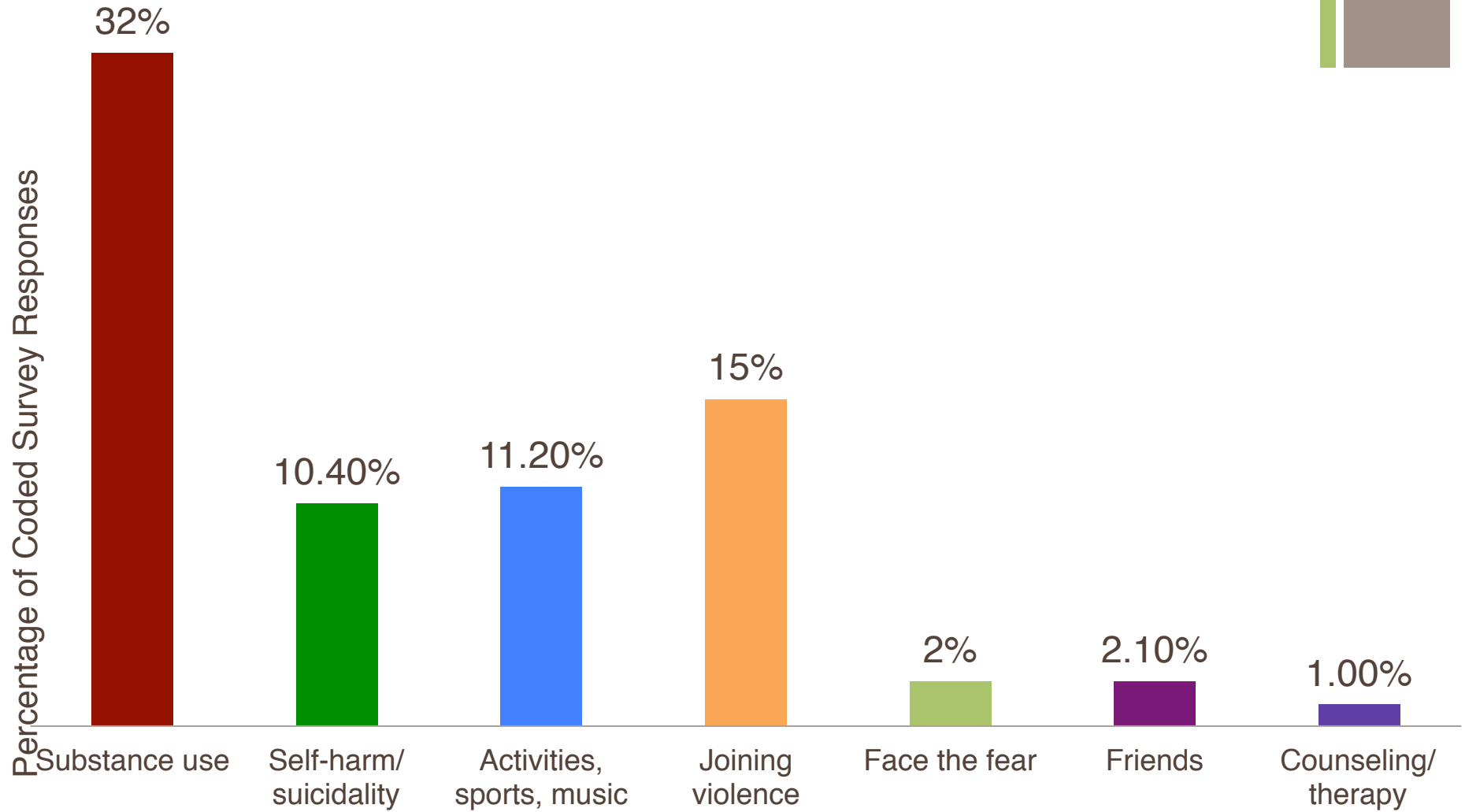
- Drugs and alcohol
- Facing the fear or running away
- Harm to self and others
- Seeking support was rarely mentioned

## Youth Want & Need





# How do young people cope with violence?





+ You feel hopeless, trapped, angry... like you're dying,  
slowly. **You just dealing with death on a day-to-day basis.**



Some people after a while, they don't even cry...

**But like, this is home. Where else am I going to go?**



# Key Themes

## Trauma is...

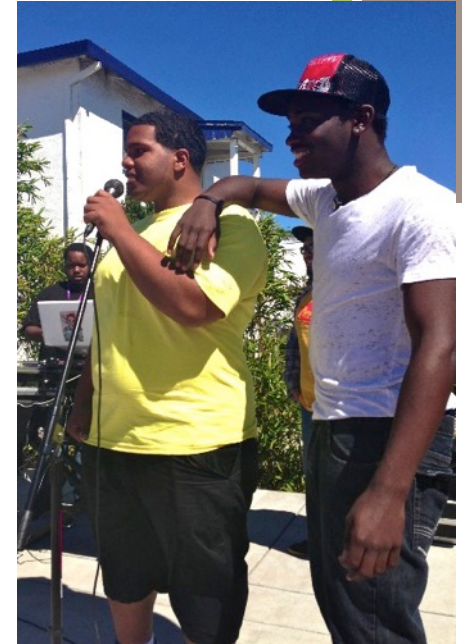
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## Youth Want & Need

- Someone to listen and care
- Alternatives to what they see
- Opportunities to lead and learn





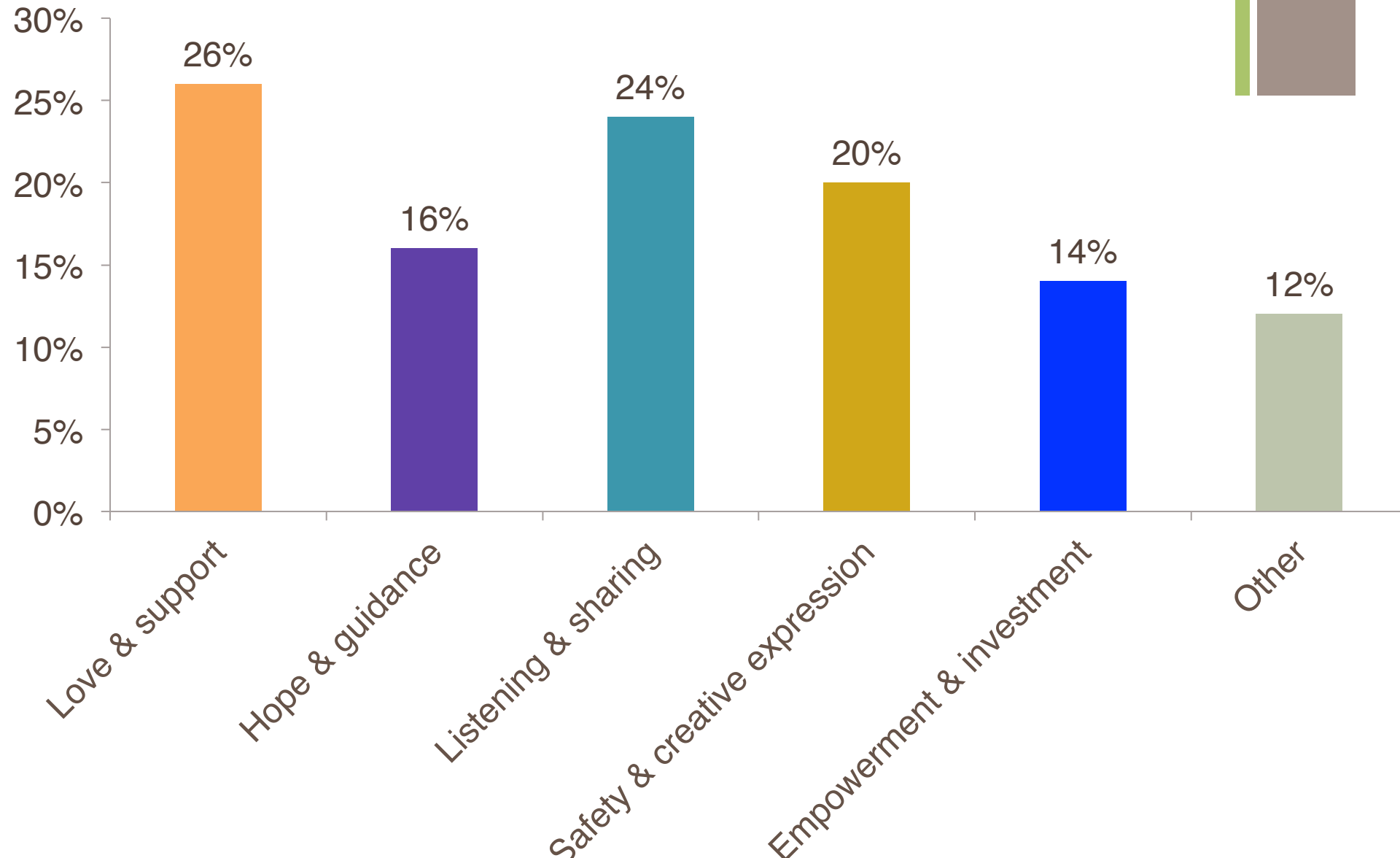
# + Emergent Themes:

## youth agency & power

‘We know we can’t run the city- it’s too complex- but **our experience and our voices should count**, especially because we’re the most effected.’



# + What do young people in Richmond need most?





- Some people are like 'I can't wait to get out [of Richmond] - I can't wait to go far' you know. But I feel like **if people actually made an effort to try and change it- they make a movement towards changing it- I feel like Richmond would be a pretty cool place to live.** We don't have a lot of like fun places to go to but we can always make something fun.

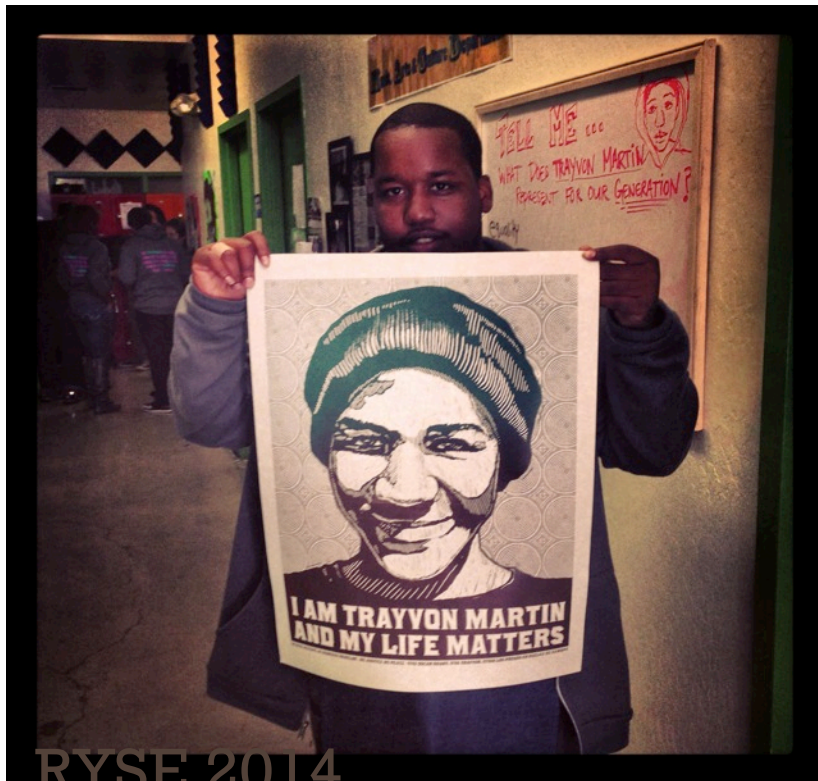
■ *- Dalia Ramos, 18 years old*





What inspires me is being a part of young people doing something together... collaborating and coming together.

Another thing that inspired me is... meeting people from other sides of Richmond, folks who in another context I wouldn't talk to, but up in here we making music together.



And knowing that, okay it's going to take us to do that.

It's going to take your wits and your talent and your charisma and your love, and your consistency to go out there and make that first step.

- Mentors & guides
- Examples of what's possible
- Setting limits from loving place

Hope &  
Guidance

Listening  
& Sharing

- Someone to listen without judgment
- Trusted relationships w/ peers & adults
- Knowing I'm not alone

What young people want and  
need

Power &  
Investment

Safety &  
Creativity

- More resources
- Reducing structural violence
- Reducing punitive policies

- Safe spaces
- More youth programs
- Alternative activities to become engaged in



# How do we create atmospheres of healing?



## ➤ **Work across roles and systems**

- Remembering we are accountable first and foremost to young people/students
- Engage in partnerships and healthy struggle

## ➤ **Acknowledge and address the social ecologies of violence**

- Naming and validating young people's experiences
- Fostering SEL AND socio-political development

## ➤ **Avoid simplistic moral frames:**

- Victim vs. perpetrator modalities
- Good vs. bad behaviors or symptoms
- Zero tolerance policies

## ➤ **Heal ourselves, together**

- Includes self-care AND collective healing
- Building a beloved community.
- Discuss our wounds, make repairs
- Listening and witnessing each other





# Youth Participatory Action Research

- Public Health Interns

## What's Next:

- YPAR: Coping and Stress
- Public Health Youth
- Qualitative and Quantitative Leadership Pipeline
- Presentations to Youth and Adult Stakeholders
- Actions/Recommendations



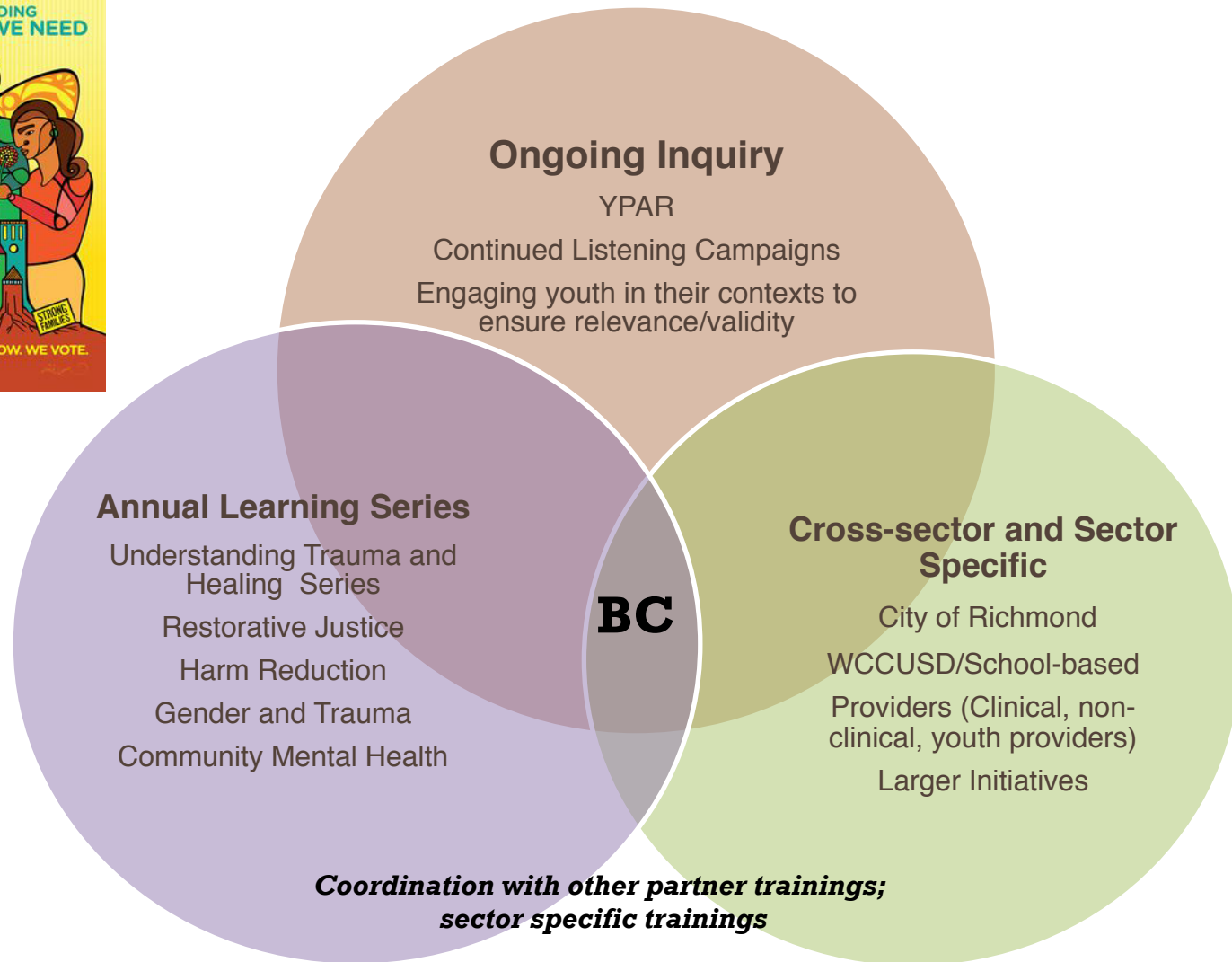
## Counselor [How often do you engage in these activities]

- Peer facilitator Chat Lounge
- I'd rather talk to someone around my age because they are conducting YPAR on School Climate, Safety and Visibility
- Relationship is the best stress reliever...When I don't have it it's like WW3 and a half..."
- More investment in youth and safe spaces

less training, more accessing adults for support

# Building a Beloved Community (BC):

responsive healing-centered systems



BC: Create a coordinated system of cross-sector stakeholders to meaningfully address and respond to acute, chronic, and historical trauma and violence, and the immediate and underlying conditions of inequity.