**Introduction**

Runaway and homeless transitional aged youth in Dayton, Ohio are an underserved population. These youth have a high prevalence of substance use disorders (SUD) with 70% having a history of drug use and 60% having a diagnosed mental illness. At present, most of these youth are not screened or assessed for SUD. Additionally, studies show that common substance abuse strategies do not resonate with young adults whose substance use tends to be shaped by the following: where they live; socio-cultural beliefs; experiences with peers; and their perceived benefit from substance use. Instead of a “one-size-fits-all” treatment program, the DayTREEx program was created to address the crucial need for services and to address service gaps for this population utilizing harm reduction strategies that are tailored to young people.

**Methods**

Procedure: The DayTREEx program has partnered with Daybreak, a shelter for runaway and homeless youth, to provide SUD and mental health screening and treatment, tobacco cessation, SUD education, HIV/hepatitis risk reduction and testing, case management, and other recovery support. Participants were screened for SUD and mental health disorders; those with service needs were enrolled in the program, connected to formal treatment and engaged with harm reduction strategies. Outcome measures, including substance use and mental health symptoms, were obtained from self-reported data at baseline and six-month follow-up. Paired samples t-tests were used to measure change in outcome measures from baseline to follow-up.

Participants: The DayTREEx program screened 135 individuals. Of those screened, 51.9% were male and 47.4% were female. Nearly all of the participants were either African American (54.1%) or White (29.6%). The other 16.3% of individuals identified as multi-racial, American Indian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or “other.” Additionally, nearly 16% of individuals identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino. Ages of those enrolled ranged from 18 to 24 with fairly even distribution between the ages.

**Substance Use and Mental Health at Baseline**

To accurately assess lifetime substance use history, the program utilizes the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance involvement Screening Test (ASSIST). The ASSIST was developed for the World Health Organization (WHO) and asks questions about specific substances individually. Mental health questions are from the CSAT GPRA interview instrument and ask individuals to reflect on the 30 days prior to their baseline interview.

![Figure 2: Substance use history is extensive with this population.](https://example.com/figure2)

**Results**

The DayTREEx program has 108 individuals who have completed both a baseline and six-month follow-up interview. The following analysis utilizes questions asked as part of the CSAT GPRA interview. All questions asked the individual to reflect on the 30 days prior to their interview.

**Conclusions**

The DayTREEx program is positively affecting the lives of its participants through the provision of harm reduction strategies, recovery services and referrals to formal treatment. Transitional aged youth at high risk for SUD and mental health disorders are being screened and referred to a variety of services and are demonstrating reductions in their substance use and improvements in mental health.

**Literature Cited**

