

WE THANK THE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THEIR FEEDBACK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These stories would not be available if it were not for the courage, bravery and achievements of 25 awesome young people. Their Alias names are;

STAR

DANY

SAM

MARLEY

ALEX

ASH

ARCHIE

CHARLIE

RUTH

DARCIE

MAIZIE

LOUISE

RENEE

CHARLOTTE

ELLIE

FLORENCE

REYLO

RUBY

SARAH

BLAKE

CHYNA

DOM

WILLY

MRS. ALSINA

SALLY

I also acknowledge the PICYS Youth Workers and team for the “trustworthy” relationships and skilled Youth Work you share, and for your genuine interest in the wellbeing and opportunities for each of these young people.

ANDREW HALL
PICYS EXECUTIVE OFFICER



We acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples as the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay respect to them and their cultures, and the Elders past, present and emerging.

INTRODUCTION

The following responses are direct feedback from 25 young people engaged with Perth Inner City Youth Service (PICYS) during the period between August 2017 and June 2019.

Each young person was asked the same open ended question "Since being involved with PICYS what's been the most significant change for you?"

All the young people provided their consent to participate and allow PICYS to share the stories.

All the names have been changed to respect people's privacy. Many young people enjoyed selecting their own alias name.

Each of the 25 young people were engaged in an Individualised Support Plan with an allocated Youth Worker within either Household Network service or PILLAR youth mental health service.

Many of the young people also accessed PICYS' Basecamp open drop in times and other social events during the year (Christmas lunch, IDaHOBIT day, activities in Youth week, Homelessness week, Mental Health week, as well as NAIDOC week and SORRY Day).

Of the 25 young people there were 16 cisgender females and 3 transgender females; plus 4 cisgender males and 2 transgender males; and there were no non-binary people involved.

Below is an age breakdown of the young people at the point in time they provided their comments.

Age	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	25
No.	1	1	4	9	2	2	4	1	1

PICYS wish to acknowledge each young person for their courage to share some of their story and talk about their journey whilst engaged with PICYS.

All of these stories were gathered as part of a Transformative Evaluation research, using the Most Significant Change methodology. There is a second publication, PICYS Most Significant Change (2019), highlighting this research and evaluation practice using six of these young peoples' stories demonstrating the value and impact of "high trust" youth work relationships and practice.

In the 2018 PICYS Annual Report we shared our first full Transformative Evaluation research story – the Most Significant Change story of Chyna which was widely acknowledged as a powerful insight into the life experiences of Chyna and the benefits Chyna gained through having a "high trust" relationship with a professional and skilled youth worker.

PICYS Most Significant Change (2019) outlines the full Transformative Evaluation process applied to six young people's stories, the stories of Sam, Ash, Maizie, Renee, Ruby and Chyna. It is definitely worth the read.

THE PEOPLE AT PICYS FEEL PRIVILEGED TO WALK ALONGSIDE THESE AMAZING YOUNG PEOPLE AND SHARE IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS. THANK YOU.

ANDREW HALL
PICYS EXECUTIVE OFFICER

"I FEEL I CAN'T FIND THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE BECAUSE PICYS HAS HELPED ME WITH SOOO MUCH. SINCE BEING WITH PICYS I HAVE FOUND A THERAPIST I CAN CONNECT WITH, A CASE MANAGER WHO WANTS TO SEE ME STRIVE AND BECAUSE OF THIS I HAVE NOW FOUND MY SELF WORTH."

MAIZIE, 18 YEARS OLD

SINCE BEING INVOLVED WITH PICYS WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE FOR YOU?

STAR 19 YEARS OLD

PICYS has changed my life in very positive ways. Without them at times I would have been homeless, gone without essential food items and toiletries, and wouldn't of had someone to support me through all the tough times. The most significant change has been the support I've been given through my mental health and the help the PICYS youth worker has given me to find housing when I needed it. The impact it's had is great because there has been times where I didn't think I would make it through, but then I knew I had the support of PICYS and it helped a lot. I would have been homeless so many times if it wasn't for the PICYS youth worker helping me with housing and crisis referrals and this helped me keep on track. PICYS have helped me with coping skills, accommodation, food needs, a safe place to come to drop in and have a yarn. An amazing youth worker who supports me through everything I go through. I wouldn't call PICYS a service I would call them my family.

DANY 20 YEARS OLD

- Got a stable home
- Getting my learners done
- Got a stable job
- Getting through shit with counselling
- Become more sociable
- Able to ring/answer phone to unknown numbers
- Without PICYS I would still be living with my mother, using drugs. I might have been in jail or a drug user, like my parents, I would be like them.
- PICYS have helped me make my life, create my life for the future

SAM 21 YEARS OLD

Since working with the youth worker I have conquered a meth addiction. I was a daily meth user for seven months and was working as a sex worker. Together, the youth worker and I worked on some goal plans and utilised many different techniques to help me cope with meth cravings and the trauma of sex work. Since November last year, I have on the most part stayed clean. I am now studying at Tafe. If it wasn't for the help I got at PICYS I would be homeless or dead. PICYS also helped me with accommodation in the past. Thank you PICYS.

MARLEY 19 YEARS OLD

The most significant change PICYS has brought with it was a sense of direction and progress. Before seeing a youth worker through PICYS I had come to a standstill with many aspects of my life, working towards dealing with my mental and physical health being one of them.

PICYS had helped me organise my efforts of recovery and connected me with many valuable resources such as doctors, focus groups and appointments that I otherwise been unable to find.

The sense of structure and progress has also had a positive impact on my motivation and willingness to better myself. Over the past year I have become a more involved member of the community and have started to actively seek out more positive engagement.

ALEX 22 YEARS OLD

1 MENTAL HEALTH

- Addressing suppressed problems
 - Measurement systems (depression, anxiety, stress)
 - Referrals to services that am able to access for free
 - Offering to come with to said services and discussing processes to go through
- Casework provided in a home-style environment with other caseworkers and clients who are able to talk to each other because of how organisation is set up
- Provided a safe sense of community (helps a lot)
 - Almost like family which was important for me who felt isolated from my only blood relative that resides in Australia
 - Made me realise that support (peer and professional) comes in many forms
- Weekly appointments helping with multiple problems that occur in everyday life and platform to talk about past issues too
- Coffee in appointments are great too – calms nerves and tastes good,
- Notification of various programs (art, music, workshops and events) that raises awareness and provides avenues to explore different helpful coping mechanisms

2 PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Organised doctors' appointments with me and provided transport to and from (I was really anxious about this, but being with PICYS helped me with that)
- Recommended Dr.Quadros
 - Amazing doctor who specialises in mental health and knows how physical and mental health go hand in hand.

- Referred me to an eating disorder program via Centre for Clinical Interventions when I myself did not realise that I had anorexia nervosa
- Provided information about free dentist services via Oral Health Centre of WA
- Side note: PICYS has also been involved in my ED (eating disorder) recovery every step of the way

3 OVERALL WELL-BEING

- Helped me accept help (sounds weird, I know)
- Helped me gain confidence and helped me understand there are positive things about me too
- Provided me with a space that I feel welcome in
- Helped me embrace things for what they are – instead of cowering away from them
- Helped me gain information on tricky things
 - How to get bond back
 - Citizenship information
 - Superannuation information
 - Overcoming fear of Facebook
 - Qualification courses
- Assisting in survival
- Provide food when in need (insist even when not in need)
- Provide vouchers for groceries
- Provide assistance with information on organisations that can help with bills

PICYS is an organisation that has changed the quality of my life for the better. The above mentioned dot points are just some examples of how they've helped.

“THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE HAS BEEN THE SUPPORT I’VE BEEN GIVEN THROUGH MY MENTAL HEALTH AND THE HELP THE PICYS YOUTH WORKER HAS GIVEN ME TO FIND HOUSING WHEN I NEEDED IT. THE IMPACT IT’S HAD IS GREAT BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN TIMES WHERE I DIDN’T THINK I WOULD MAKE IT THROUGH, BUT THEN I KNEW I HAD THE SUPPORT OF PICYS AND IT HELPED A LOT.”

STAR, 19 YEARS OLD

“THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE I HAVE RECEIVED AND NOTICED WHILE WORKING WITH PICYS IS HOW MUCH SUPPORT REALLY HELPS YOU ON YOUR ROAD TO RECOVERY. BEING ABLE TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT ALL YOUR WORRIES AND IN RETURN GET KINDNESS, SUPPORT, ADVICE AND ENCOURAGEMENT HAS REALLY HELPED ME.”

DARCIE, 19 YEARS OLD

ASH 19 YEARS OLD

The most significant change for me is an increase in housing stability and a future plan for where to go next. I have more education and understanding for budgeting and independent living (e.g. how rent assistance works). It's been a good base for experimenting and getting to know how to manage my money well to live independently. This has reduced my fear for living on my own without parental support and to be able to 'hold my own' and I've gotten more independence.

I've also had more thinking time to figure out what I want to do with my life and where I want to go - a safe quiet place to be able to think about my prospects. It's been a canvas for what I needed for me to foster some self-improvement and keep my mental health stable.

These are all important things that people need that are good.

ARCHIE 17 YEARS OLD

The most significant change for me is – there has been a LOT of changes. The thing that PICYS has helped me out the most with is paperwork for things like getting on Centrelink (independent youth allowance) payments, housing (both PICYS' transitional housing and long term public priority housing) etc. I wouldn't know how to do these on my own. Providing safe housing when I wasn't able to stay in my family home because wasn't healthy has been so important.

Also, ways of getting out of the house and engaging with the community at drop-in and events has been important. This is significant to me because having a safe place to live and community engagement is important.

CHARLIE 18 YEARS OLD

Through the support of PICYS I now have a safe home environment, this is significant to me. Prior to PICYS I was living at my girlfriends (Chelsea) family home I lived there for 6 months, this was due to the breakdown of my family unit. My early life experiences have meant that I have had to grow up quickly, but I guess it means that I am better equipped than other teenagers my own age.

Since being involved with PICYS my youth worker has supported and linked me to many services; TAFE support services, GP (specialising in mental health), Oral Health, and Optometrist. I am also getting help with job search. I feel my youth worker is good fit for me, she understands me and my situation she doesn't push me just supports me and is nothing but helpful! I would have to say my youth worker at PICYS is one of the main supports in my life other than Chelsea (my girlfriend) and my mum.

RUTH 22 YEARS OLD

Through the support of PICYS I have been able to improve my mental health, accomplish personal goals and specific tasks efficiently. The youth worker assists with food, clothes and has been actively involved with prioritising a safe home environment for myself. In addition, my mental and physical health is encouraged and strengthened (e.g. I struggle financially but the youth worker organised a gym membership!) The beneficial influence reduces my anxiety significantly. My fundamental needs are acknowledged, understood and met and the extra support accelerates my progress. I am very lucky that I have a patient, kind, solution-focused and organised social worker. I hold so much value for the youth worker and other members of PICYS in the same way they value my mental health. In fact, PICYS itself has been a constant, safe and reliable place and I'm really happy I have such a trustworthy team supporting me. Thankyou!!!

DARCIE 19 YEARS OLD

"The most significant change I have received and noticed while working with PICYS is how much support really helps you on your road to recovery. Being able to talk to someone about all your worries and in return get kindness, support, advice and encouragement has really helped me." Examples of the support I receive from PICYS includes; practical skills i.e. help with Centrelink, TAFE, linking in with other services (Headspace, The Henry Street Centre), help with anxiety and relationship management, help with practical living, e.g. food vouchers, emergency relief food (including fruit and veg).

MAIZIE 18 YEARS OLD

THANK YOU PICYS

I feel I can't find the most significant change because PICYS has helped me with sooo much. Since being with PICYS I have found a therapist I can connect with, a case manager who wants to see me thrive and because of this I have now found my self worth. Without PICYS I don't believe I would've ever made it to the hospital that first time. They've improved almost every aspect of my life just by helping me learn to live it. If it weren't for PICYS and everything they have done for me I don't believe I would have been able to find my smile after I lost it. The things they have done has helped me to understand myself and why I feel they way I do. And if it weren't for that I could never have even started to improve.

LOUISE 23 YEARS OLD

- Securing own long term accommodation
- I am feeling well supported; I am lucky to be alive, without this support I wouldn't of pulled through ...I am now clean from drugs...its been a really tough year.
- At PICYS it is not as intense as appointments I have with other professionals, it is not too therapy focused its more about overall wellbeing... helping me sort out my life. My worker has been able to help me with; tenancy issues, helping clean unit (when struggling with mental health), conflict resolution with housemates, supporting me to court, appealing parking infringements etc.
- I feel at PICYS, I am part of a community, it is nice to have someone/somewhere to go to for the every day issues that pop up. The appointments I have with other professionals are once week for 1 hour, with PICYS there is flexibility, which is helpful when I need the extra support (emotionally or practically).

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ASH, 19 YEARS OLD

RENEE 22 YEARS OLD

- Weight gain
- Mental stability
- Access to services, in particular health services

How I have changed as a result of being involved with PICYS:

- Sense of security
- Sense of direction
- Control over my emotions

The most significant change that has occurred for me is 100% my health. I have gained 20kgs after being diagnosed with Anorexia. I struggled with my weight for many years as a result of an eating disorder, I have also been diagnosed with BPD.

The youth worker was persistent and helpful in my recovery, from using CBT based techniques, to negotiating with insurance companies on my behalf.

PICYS understands the link between mental and physical health and the intimidating aspect of independence. These are the things young people need help with, which cannot be done in a 'typical' psychology setting.

There are many things PICYS have done for/with me.

The most helpful and important parts were tackling the horrors and discomforts with my physical health.

From my head to my toes and everything in between I am healthy.

CHARLOTTE 19 YEARS OLD

Over the year I've been involved with PICYS I have realised I can change myself to be a better person. The responsibilities in life that I realised I've changed in are renting my own home, looking after myself better and being a responsible mother. If it wasn't for PICYS I wouldn't be where I am today. For the rest of my time in PICYS I hope it makes me stronger and wiser.

ELLIE 25 YEARS OLD

PICYS helped me by giving me a chance to live out of home and escape a bad environment. They taught me how to save and gave insights into a lot of mental health programs I didn't know about. I've made a lot of great friends through PICYS, but the best thing is the support. I am always listening to others that I never feel able to talk to others. I have found comfort in being able to express myself with the youth workers. That's what makes PICYS great, knowing they won't judge.

FLORENCE 22 YEARS OLD

Since becoming involved with PICYS they housed me and during this time I expressed my interest in accessing their support in terms of my transition from Male to Female. Since then they have supported me in many ways to start and continue my transition. Not only have they been emotionally and sometimes financially supportive they have also supported me through my decisions by simply being there.

The worker I am currently linked in with has gone above and beyond with supporting me through this transition and because of this I have now officially started my transition having been going through HRT for almost the last 2 years and I have now changed my name officially to my choosing.

REYLO 18 YEARS OLD

Through being with PICYS I have managed to gain the ability to have confidence in the decisions I make not only for the important necessities to live an adult life as well as confidence in my mental and social well-being.

“PICYS UNDERSTANDS THE LINK BETWEEN MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AND THE INTIMIDATING ASPECT OF INDEPENDENCE. THESE ARE THE THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE NEED HELP WITH, WHICH CANNOT BE DONE IN A 'TYPICAL' PSYCHOLOGY SETTING.”

RENEE, 22 YEARS OLD

CHYNA 19 YEARS OLD

Having a place which is permanent. I hadn't been stable even before my mum got arrested, so 18 years of instability at one point we lived in a car. Since Mum got arrested I moved around without her so for 7 years on my own. That was SHIT, very unstable. I was sick of moving, the people I stayed with were good but some weren't accepting of my gayness or my transition. I had never had my own place before PICYS, having my own unit was good because of the freedom and independence. It's good to have people you can talk to at PICYS, I don't use drugs as much as I was, I'm more confident than I was and happier than I was. PICYS has helped me with independence, how to live on my own, I already knew how to but now I have more skills, life skills and more people skills. I already had good people skills because I know how to talk to people but still more skills than I had before. I think differently about my future now I used to think I would end up a junkie on the streets but now I think I'm going to have a good future with a good job and a nice husband. Let that sink in! This is important to me because I won't have some bum-ass future like I thought I was going to have. I'm going to go far places, I'm going to study now, I've got stable accommodation so I won't have to keep moving all the time. I now have more life skills and I have people I can talk to and trust. This is good because if you haven't got someone to talk you turn to drugs or alcoholism.

“THE THINGS I AM LEARNING HAVE GIVEN ME SELF-CONFIDENCE AND EXCITEMENT FOR MY FUTURE. I FEEL VERY PRODUCTIVE AND MOTIVATED WHEREAS BEFORE I FELT LIKE I WAS VERY STUCK AND LOST.”

DOM, 19 YEARS OLD

DOM 19 YEARS OLD

The most significant change for me is my self-confidence and independence. Being involved with PICYS has taught me skills that are helping me function as an adult. I have always struggled to understand things and complete tasks but PICYS is helping me to achieve my goals and grow as a person already. The things I am learning have given me self-confidence and excitement for my future, I feel very productive and motivated whereas before I felt like I was very stuck and lost. I have learned lots of things, social skills, things related to money, just adult skills in general, opening up to people, organisation and learning to handle responsibilities.

WILLY 18 YEARS OLD

PICYS has helped with stuff, like support with Centrelink and potentially getting a job. The people are friendly and easy to talk to. Oh and you can get free food! Why is this helpful, because I was struggling with all those things. I was in really bad place, after settling down and having a basecamp to rest up I could focus more on my goals. It's been a really big help, especially as I was struggling with accommodation. There is also support as I am having a baby. Support also around my drug and alcohol use and options, I wasn't mature enough in the past to apply myself to these courses.

MRS ALSINA 16 YEARS OLD

My mentality, the way I handle things, like adult things like budgeting, eating normal foods, helping me attend school. PICYS gave me more independence and confidence in myself. I am happier here than in other places I have stayed. This accommodation and support helps me with my future as I will have more skills than other people my age, I already have the skills I need for when I'm older. PICYS has helped me with my weed use, paying off debts and supporting me emotionally.

SALLY 20 YEARS OLD

Having people that stand behind you and give you hope that life is worth living. That set backs are not permanent and things do get better. This is important to me as I was homeless at a young age, using drugs and had mental health issues and it's easy to get stuck in a mindset that you are damaged goods. PICYS has helped me to not feel sorry for myself and start doing something about my situation.

