



# Southern Canada

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## Research Site: Winnipeg & Halifax, Southern Canada

**I** CAN do anything I want to, and if I can't do it, whatever doesn't kill me it will only make me stronger. And if it does kill me then I died doing what I thought was right so I go to heaven.

—Halifax boy

## Context and Risk Factors:

**T**WO cities compose our Southern Canada site: Winnipeg and Halifax. Winnipeg, the capital city of Manitoba, is located near the geographic center of North America and has a population of approximately 650,000 people. Halifax, Nova Scotia's capital city, lies on the North Atlantic coast and is the second-largest coastal city in Canada. In 1996, Halifax city amalgamated with surrounding towns to become the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), which has a population of 359,111 people. Although diverse in geography, Winnipeg and Halifax present many of the same risk factors for children and youth. Youth in both settings experience marginalization, discrimination, and violence due to sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and gender. Other threats that youth endure in Southern Canada include: mental, emotional, and physical health problems; problems in school; inclusion in criminal activities; homelessness; childhood traumas (such as physical, mental, and sexual abuse); parental alcoholism and drug addiction; personal addiction to alcohol and drugs; early sexual behavior; and poverty.<sup>1</sup>

**Participants:** Of the 124 youth that participated in the study from Southern Canada, 35% (43) were female and 65% (81) were male. The average age of participants was 16 years, with ages ranging from 12 to 29. The average education level of participants was grade 9, with grades ranging from 2 to 13. The communities of the participants saw the youth as coping well, based on culturally appropriate norms for behavior.

**What does resilience mean in Halifax and Winnipeg?:** In each site, qualitative interviews consisting of nine 'catalyst' questions were conducted with youth considered by the community to be 'coping well with adversity.' In Halifax, 2 girls, 2 boys, one focus-group of mothers, and one focus-group of professionals working with youth spoke with us about what it means to be resilient. In Winnipeg, 5 girls, 1 boy, and one focus-group with adults told us what resilience means to them. Youth from Southern Canada highlighted the importance of staying grounded, maintaining a firm sense of self, and building self-confidence in order to overcome a myriad of challenges, including problems in school, homelessness, family violence, racism and drug addiction. Canadian youth told us for example:

"I just keep that confidence and strength in myself. That knowing I can do it and I don't have to be like anybody else. I don't have to change myself to make other people happy. I'm happy with myself, that's it." (Winnipeg girl)

"I can do anything I want to, and if I can't do it whatever doesn't kill me it will only make me stronger. And if it does kill me then I died doing what I thought was right so I go to heaven. So I do feel safe and secure." (Halifax boy)



## WHAT is the International Resilience Project (IRP)?:

The IRP is a mixed-methods, culturally sensitive approach to understanding how youth around the world effectively cope with the diverse challenges they face. The IRP now has partnerships with researchers and community-based organizations on six continents in over 25 communities. The IRP is currently bringing to a close the first three-year phase of research, in which data was collected with over 1500 children in 14 communities worldwide. In Southern Canada, youth told us how they manage to rise above the challenges in their lives.

### For further information:

For a full discussion of the *International Resilience Project*, please see the accompanying Project Report contained with this package or visit us at our website [www.resilienceproject.org](http://www.resilienceproject.org)

### For copies of this report, please contact:

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# Studying Resilience:

A team of international researchers created the content for the **Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)**, a 58-item instrument administered across all 14 research- sites. Local research teams also added 15 contextually and culturally specific questions to the CYRM during its administration in their communities. Questions were scored from 1 (do not at all agree) to 5 (agree a lot) by the youth themselves.

## Sample of Southern Canada CYRM Mean Scores

((Highest, lowest, and largest variance when compared to overall CYRM mean)

Order	CYRM Question listed by Mean Score	Site mean	Global mean	Variance	Color codes
1	Is getting an education important to you? (CYRM 10)	4.3	4.4	-0.1	■
2	Are you able to see a doctor when you need one? (CYRM 32)	4.2	3.9	0.3	■ ■
3	Are you proud to be (Nationality: Canadian)? (CYRM 53)	4.1	3.9	0.2	■
4	Do you keep going even when life gets difficult? (CYRM 3)	4.1	3.8	0.3	■ ■
5	Does what you do now influence what will happen later in your life? (CYRM 4)	3.9	3.6	0.3	■
6	Are you comfortable with how you express yourself sexually? (CYRM 18)	3.8	3.3	0.5	■
7	Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you? (CYRM 24)	2.6	3.1	-0.5	■
8	Does the older generation understand and tolerate the ideas and strong beliefs of people your age? (CYRM 5)	2.6	2.9	-0.3	■
9	Do you believe that life should be lived in a certain way? (CYRM 15)	2.5	3.1	-0.6	■ ■
10	Does your family have a ritual or routine around mealtimes? (CYRM 19)	2.4	2.9	-0.5	■ ■
11	Do you participate in organized religious activities? (CYRM 46)	2.2	2.7	-0.5	■ ■
Overall Mean across 58 CYRM questions		3.5	3.4	0.1	

■ Highest Site Scores on CYRM ■ Largest Variance Below Global Mean (-)  
 ■ Lowest Site Scores on CYRM ■ Largest Variance Above Global Mean (+)

## Southern Canada CYRM Results:

■ Across all 58 measures of the CYRM, Southern Canada’s mean (3.5 out of a possible 5) was slightly higher than the global sample mean across all sites (3.4). Within the Southern Canadian sample however, youth placed particular importance (or scored themselves highest) on CYRM statements: 10 ‘Is getting an education important to you?’, 32 ‘Are you able to see a doctor when you need one?’, 53 ‘Are you proud to be (Nationality:)?’, and 3 ‘Do you keep going even when life gets difficult?’

■ Canadian youth gave lower scores to questions: 5 ‘Does the older generation understand and tolerate the ideas and strong beliefs of people your age?’, 15 ‘Do you believe that life should be lived in a certain way?’, 19 ‘Does your family have a ritual or routine around mealtimes?’, and 46 ‘Do you participate in organized religious activities?’

■ Southern Canadian youth scored higher than the overall global sample on several CYRM questions. When compared to the global sample, Southern Canadian youth showed the most positive variance (scoring higher than the overall mean for youth globally) on questions: 32 ‘Are you able to see a doctor when you need one?’, 3 ‘Do you keep going even when life gets difficult?’, 4 ‘Does what you do now, influence what will happen later in your life?’, and 18 ‘Are you comfortable with how you express yourself sexually?’

■ Southern Canadian youth showed the largest **negative variance** (scoring lower than the overall mean for youth globally) on questions: 24 ‘Are religious or spiritual beliefs a source of strength for you?’, 15 ‘Do you believe that life should be lived in a certain way?’, 19 ‘Does your family have a ritual or routine around mealtimes?’, and 46 ‘Do you participate in organized religious activities?’

## Southern Canada Site Specific Question Mean Scores

Site Specific Questions	Mean/5
SSQ 10: Do you have access to technology (like computers?)	4.0
SSQ 8: Are you able to avoid being bullied?	3.9
SSQ 6: Are you involved in activities or hobbies that you enjoy?	3.8
SSQ 7: Are you willing to give yourself a second chance?	3.6
SSQ 9: Do you feel like you fit in with those around you?	3.6
SSQ 4: Do you feel that your close friends really know who you are?	3.6
SSQ 11: Are you a positive influence on others?	3.4
SSQ 1: Are you happy with how things are for you in your life now?	3.4
SSQ 3: Do your parents want to know exactly where you are and what you are doing?	3.4
SSQ 13: Do you think about how your life differs from youth in other parts of the world?	3.1
SSQ 2: Do you feel sorry for someone who has made a mistake?	3.1
SSQ 12: Do you think that having lots of money will lead to happiness?	2.9
SSQ 15: Are you influenced by advertising that you see and/or hear on television, radio, or in magazines?	2.7
SSQ 14: Do you believe there is too much violence on television, in the movies, on the radio, or in magazines?	2.6
SSQ 5: Do you often feel left out of things at your school?	2.4

Southern Canadian youth scored a mean of 3.4 across all site-specific questions, which was slightly lower than their mean score of 3.5 on the 58 globally administered CYRM questions.

## Understanding the Results “Ecologically”:

The IRP team reached a consensus that the 58 global CYRM questions could be separated into four unique and important aspects of resilience: *individual traits and characteristics, relationship factors, community contexts, and social and political aspects of culture*. Of the 58 CYRM questions, 23 related to individual traits and characteristics, 7 related to relationship factors, 15 to community contexts, and 12 related to aspects of culture. Focus on these four areas of resilience shows which aspects are most relevant to children’s success in difficult contexts. One can see from the chart below which aspects of resilience are more or less important to Southern Canadian youth when compared to youth across all 14 research sites.

## Four-part Ecological Model:

Gender Comparison of Southern Canada Site Means with Overall Sample Means (All Sites)

Ecological Model (Aspects of Resilience)	Site	Global	Girls		Boys	
			S. Canada	Global	S. Canada	Global
Individual Aspects	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Relationship Aspects	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.3
Community Aspects	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.5
Culture Aspects	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3

## Endnotes

1 Risk factors and context information provided by the IRP site partners. See [www.resilienceproject.org](http://www.resilienceproject.org)