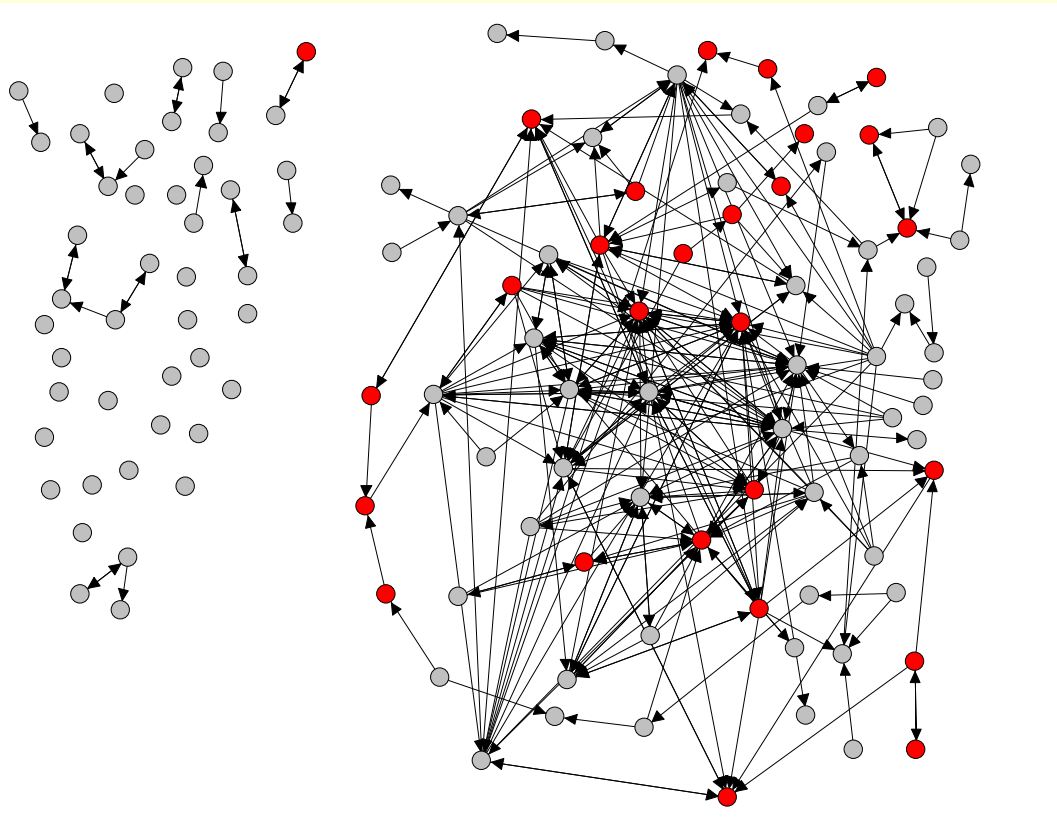


Social Networks and Social Networking Technology for Preventing HIV/AIDS among Homeless Youth



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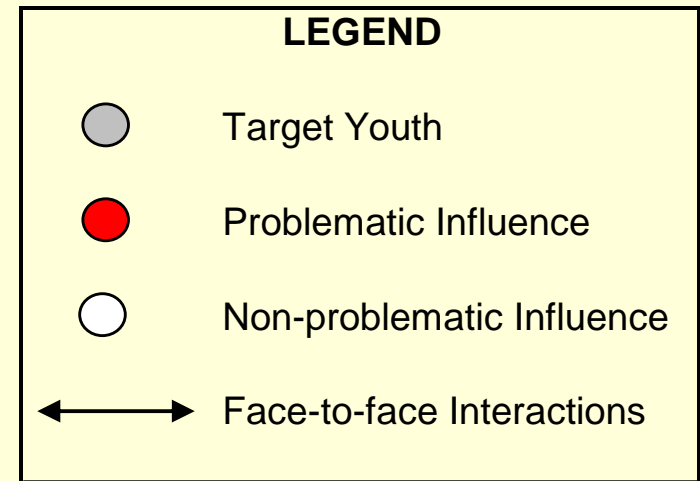
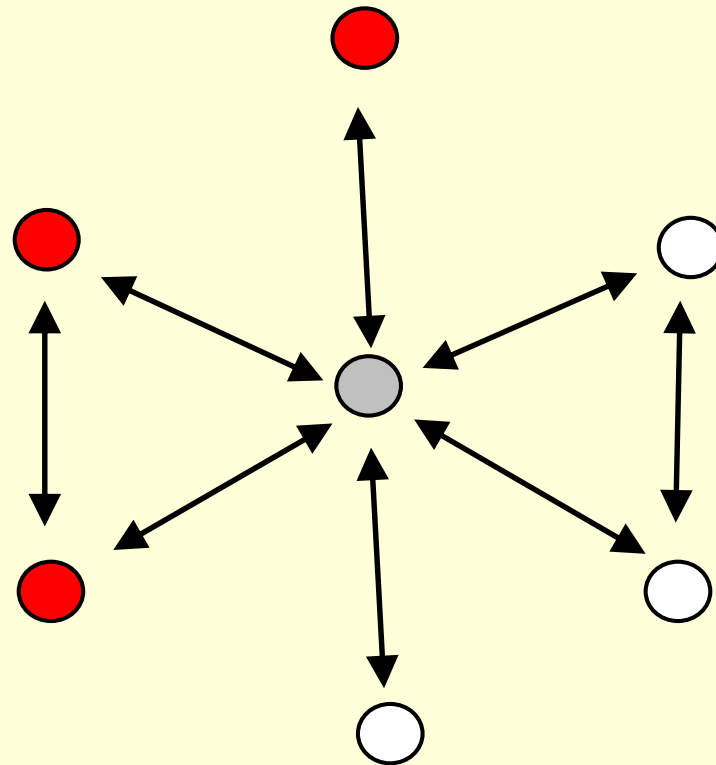
Homeless Youth and HIV Risk

1.6 million homeless & runaway youth annually in U.S.

HIV prevalence among homeless youth is 2 to 11% in urban centers.

Peer life is exaggerated & negative peer influences are a major source of risk.

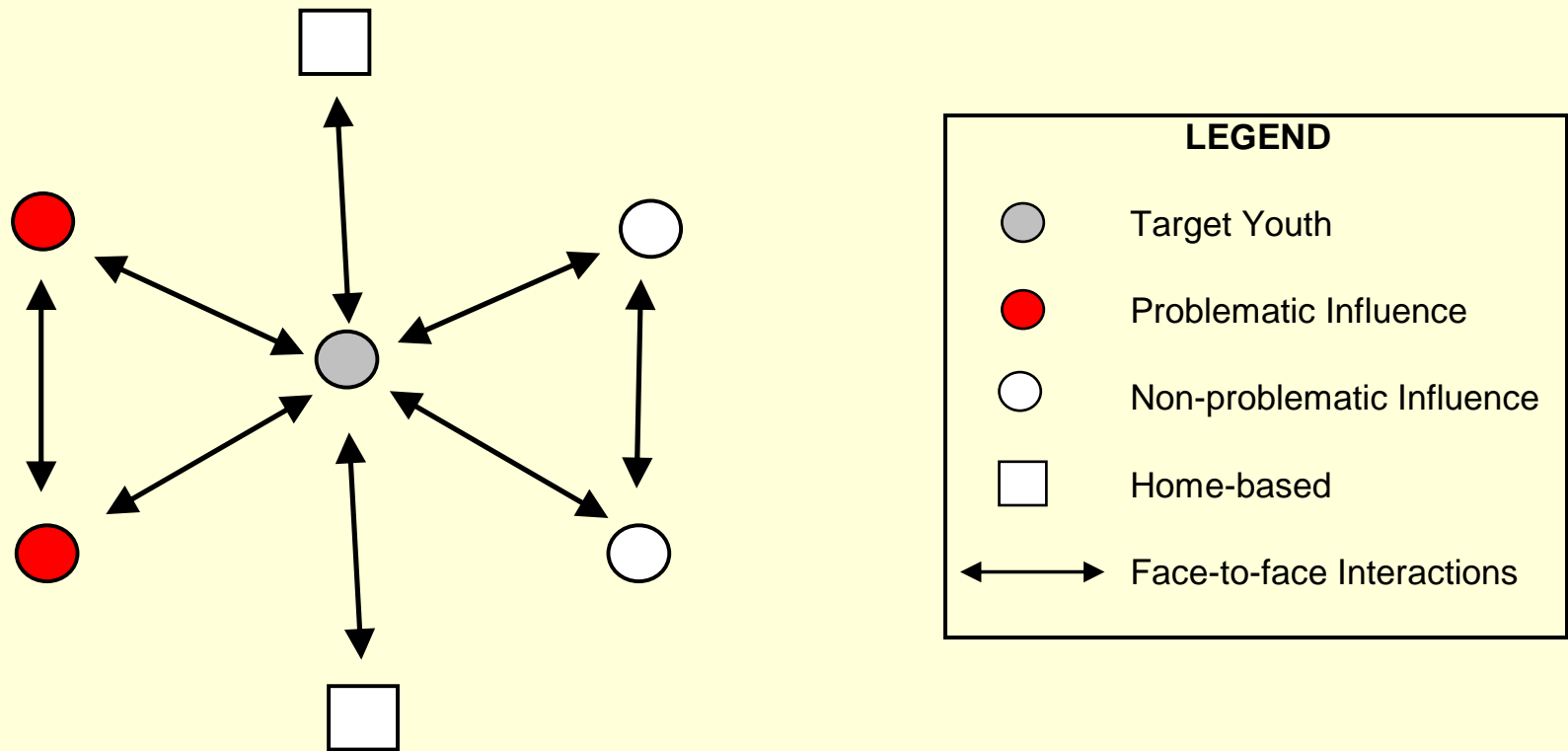
The standard story: street ties are a source of problematic influences.



More risk taking peers, more HIV risk

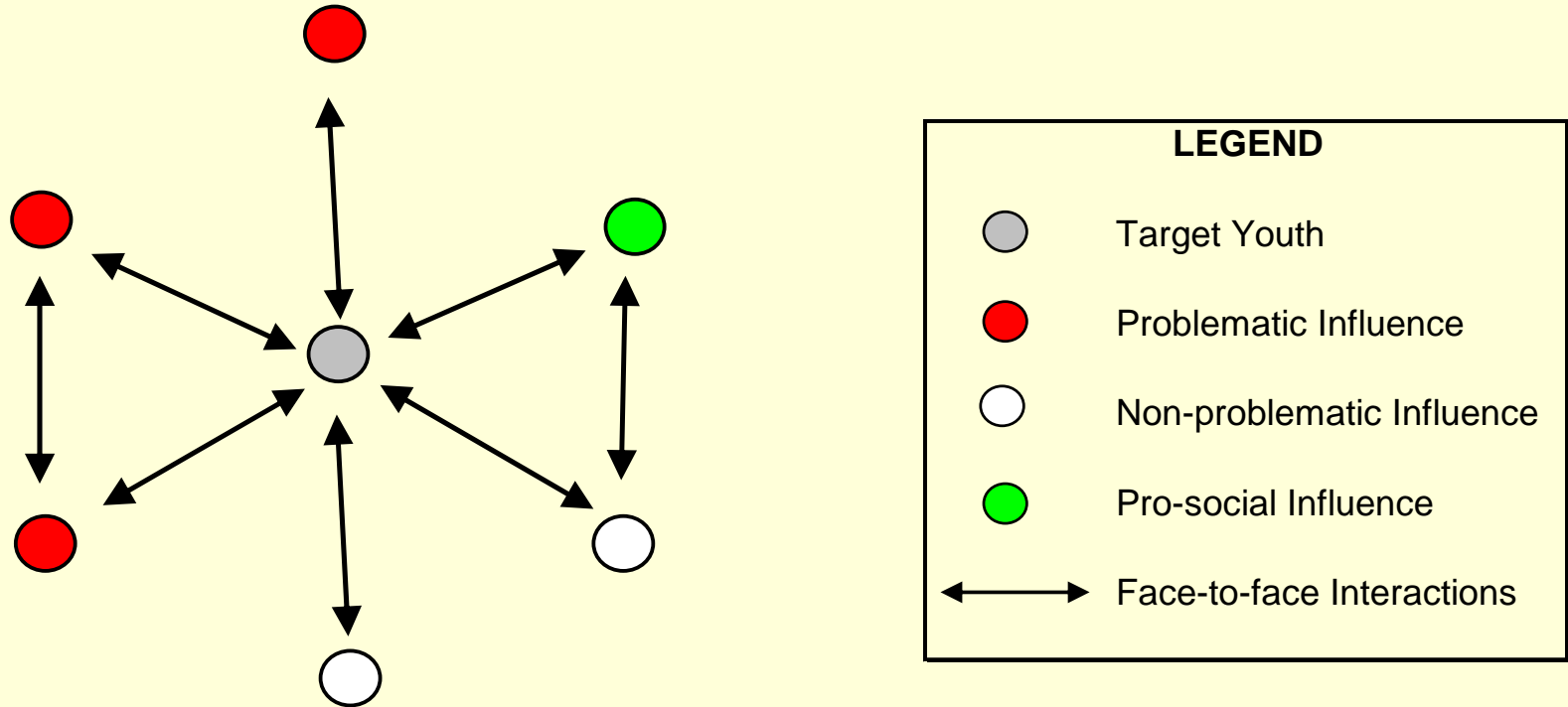
(e.g. Kipke et al., 1997; Whitbeck et al., 1999; Tyler et al., 2000; Rice et al., 2005)

Home-based ties exist



(Johnson et al., 2005; Milburn et al., 2006)

Pro-social peers exist and reduce drug-taking and HIV risk.



More friends who are in school or get along with family, less HIV risk

(Rice et al., 2007; 2008)

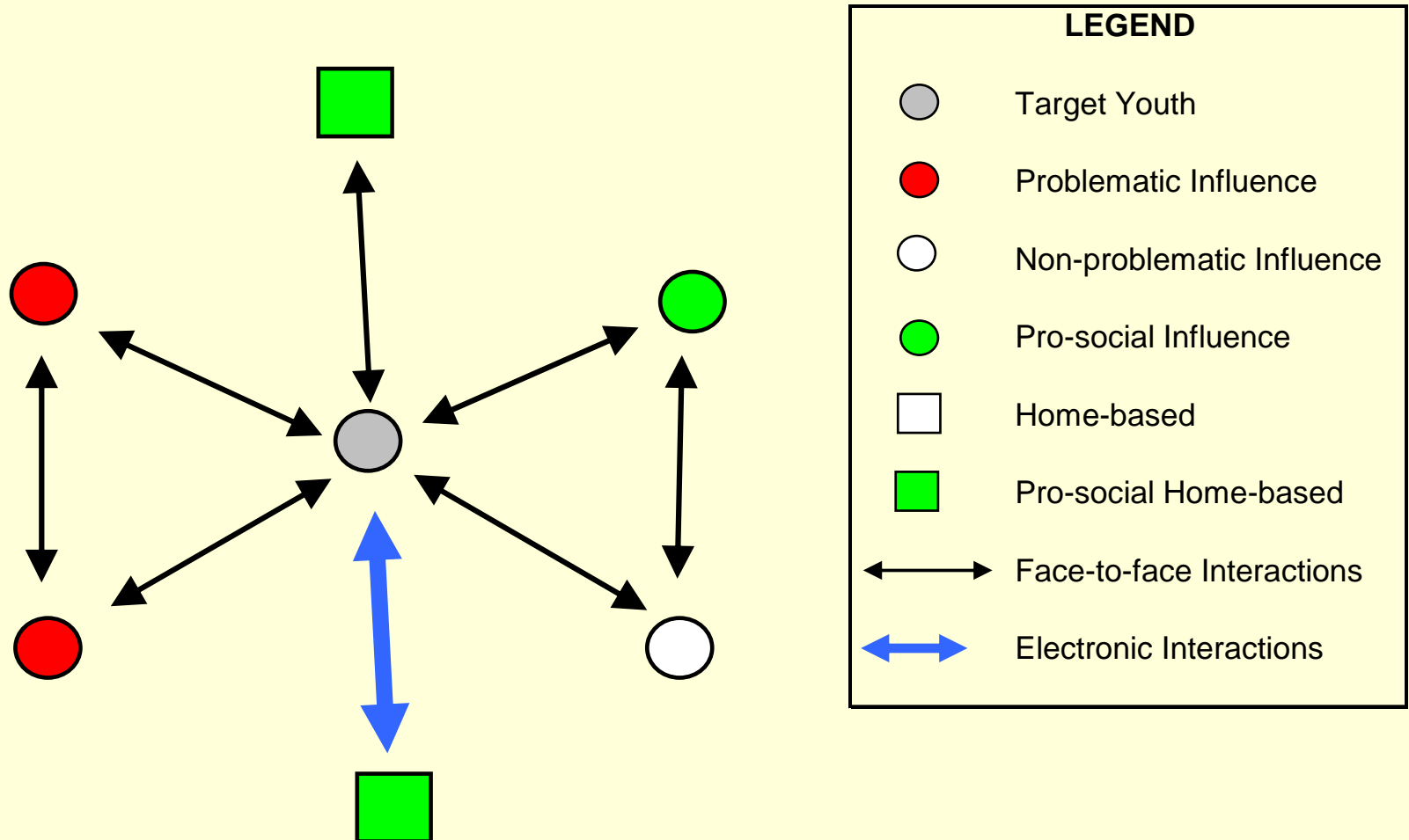
Research Question: How do social networks impact condom use among homeless youth?

Do perceptions of condom use among peers impact condom use?

Does it matter if condom using peers are home-based or street-based?

Does it matter if the tie is maintained face-to-face or electronically?

**Pro-social influence should be a function of perceived behavior,
reference group, and the form communication takes.**



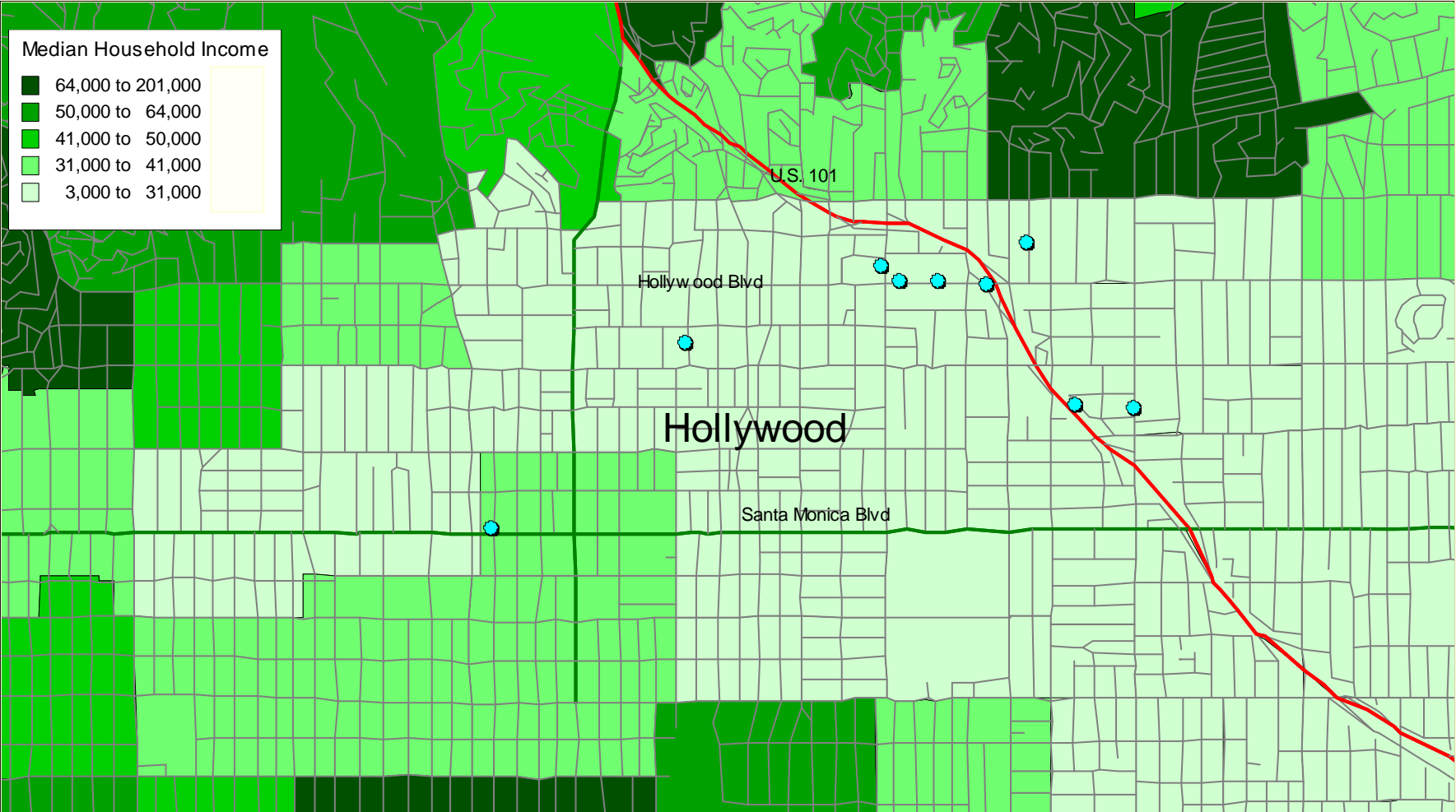
Hollywood Youth Homelessness

HIV prevalence of 5-11%

11,000 homeless youth in LA county each night (recorded in 2007)

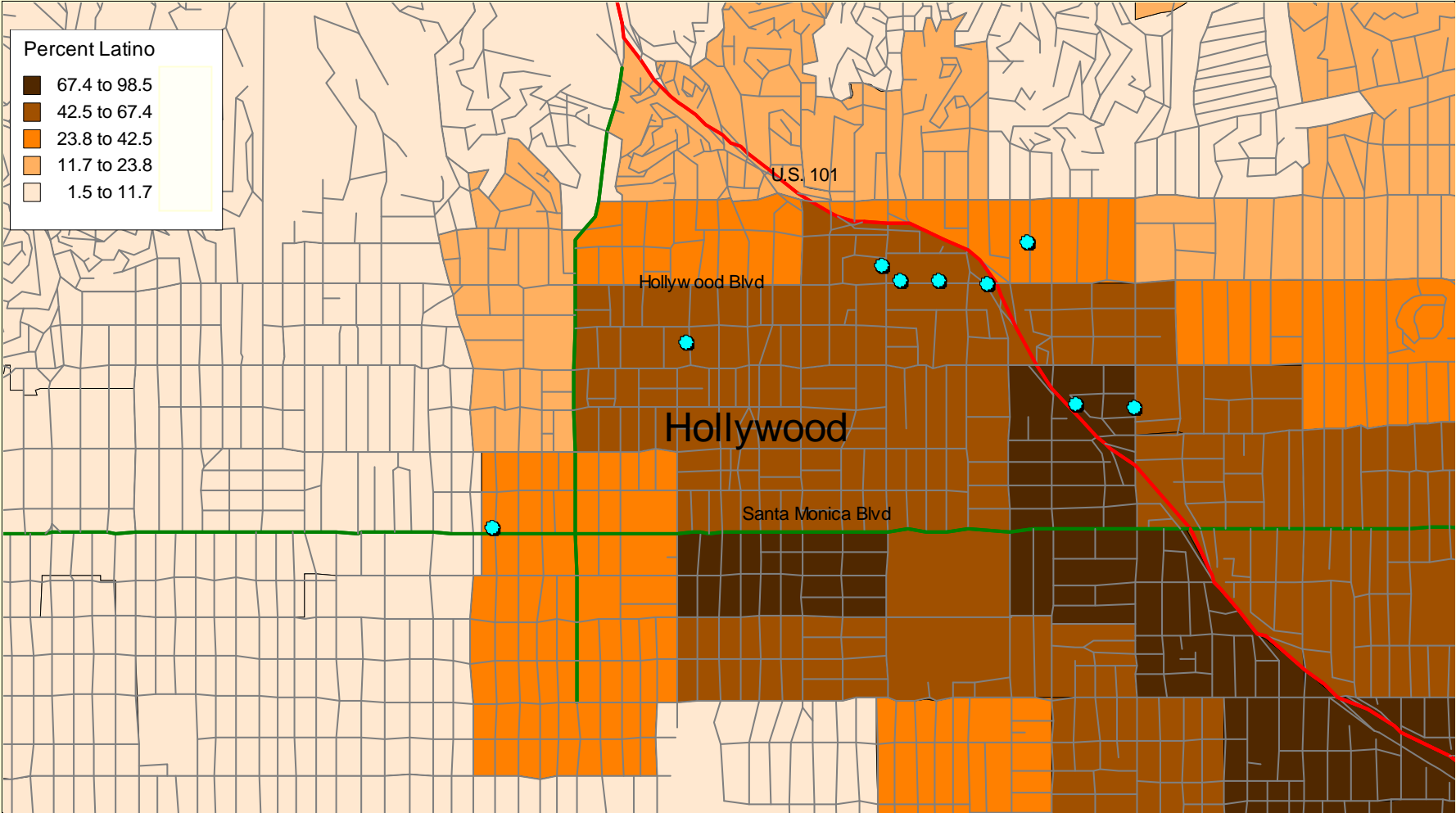
Concentration of youth services in Eastern half of Hollywood

Figure 1: Agencies Serving Homeless Youth in Hollywood & Median Income of Surrounding Area



U. S. Census Data 2000.

Figure 2: Agencies Serving Homeless Youth in Hollywood & Percent Latino Residents of Surrounding Area



U. S. Census Data 2000.

Homeless youth are alien to the neighborhood

Pulled to Hollywood by promise of entertainment industry and service agencies

Homeless youth in Hollywood are not Latino

Youth are not connected to the neighborhood

Youth influences come from other homeless youth and home-based ties

Social Network Survey

June 19 – Aug 21, 2008

N=140 youth, 136 with complete data

Convenience sample at a drop in agency (My Friend's Place)

Agency saw 617 total youth during observation period (sample = 22%)

Representative of age, gender, and race/ethnic composition of clients

Format: Self-Administered Computer Based Survey & Interactive network mapping

Table 1: Demographics of sampled youth (n=136)

Gender

Male	60 %
Female	39 %
Transgender	1 %

Race/Ethnicity

American Indian	5 %
Asian	1 %
African American/Black	35 %
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	1 %
White	20 %
Mixed Race	15 %
Latino	23 %

Sexual Orientation

GLBT	13 %
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Age mean = 20 stddev = 2.1

Sexually active past 90 days 79 %

Table 2: HIV risk behaviors of sexually active sampled youth (n=105)

Unprotected sex at last intercourse **55%**

1 partner in previous 90 days and used condoms **26%**

Multiple partners and did not use condoms **27%**

Interactive Network Mapping

Face to face data collection with trained interviewer

Nominate “ties” in previous month

Consistent set of prompts for nominations

Attributes & relations

- Home based vs. street based

- Face-to-face vs. electronic (email & phone)

- If sexually active, condom user or not

Figure 3: Example of a respondent's small social network

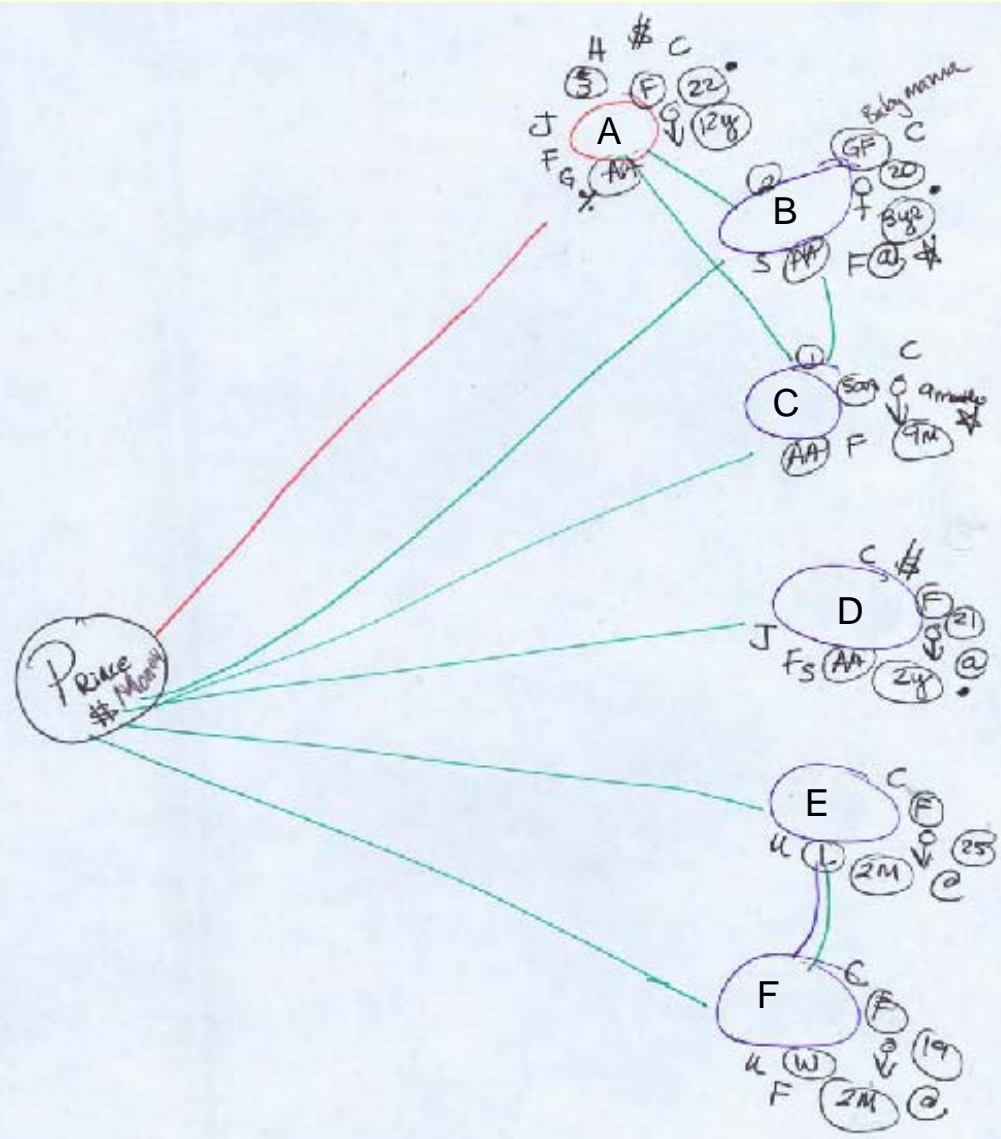


Figure 4: Example of a respondent's large social network

30001
June 19, 2008

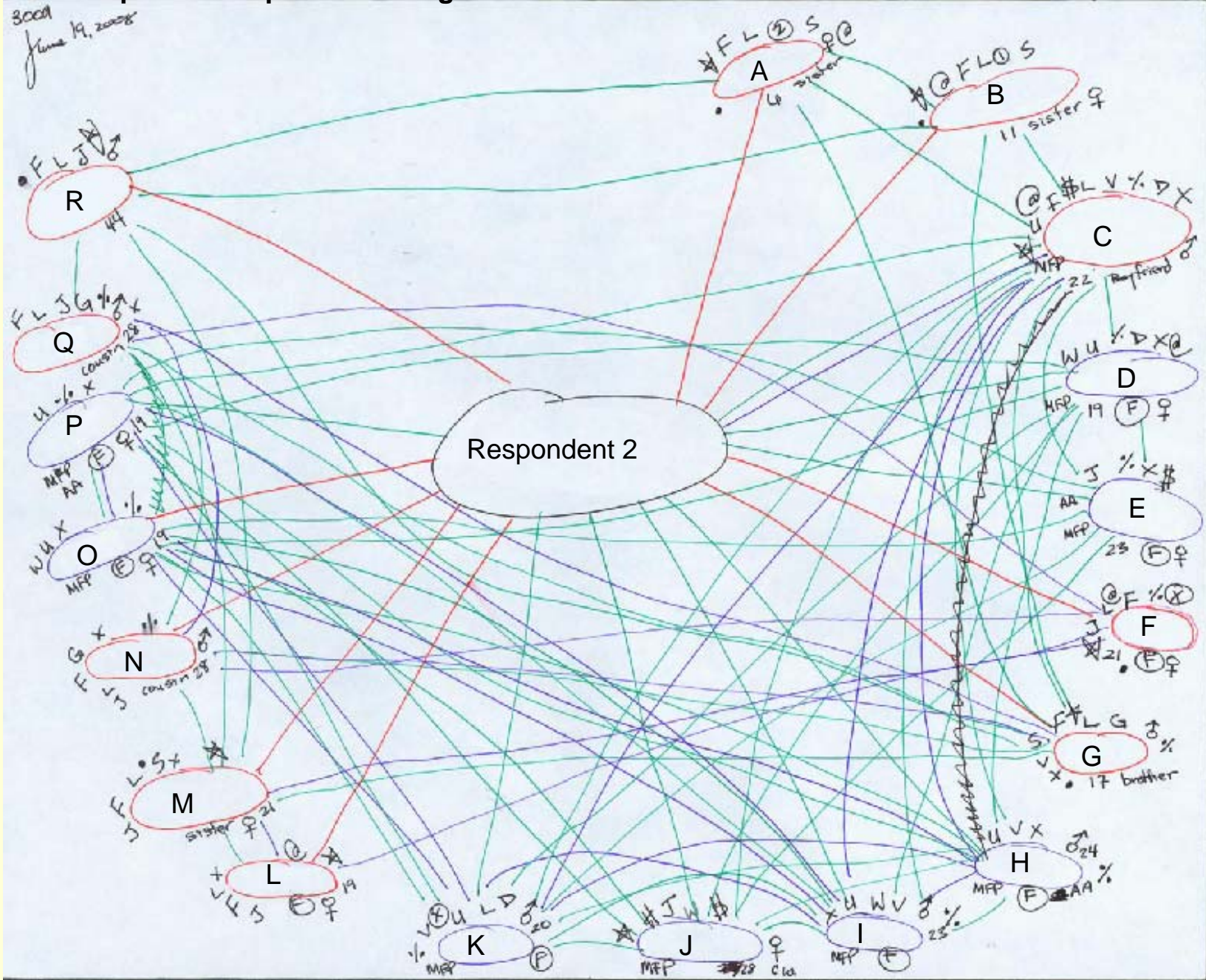
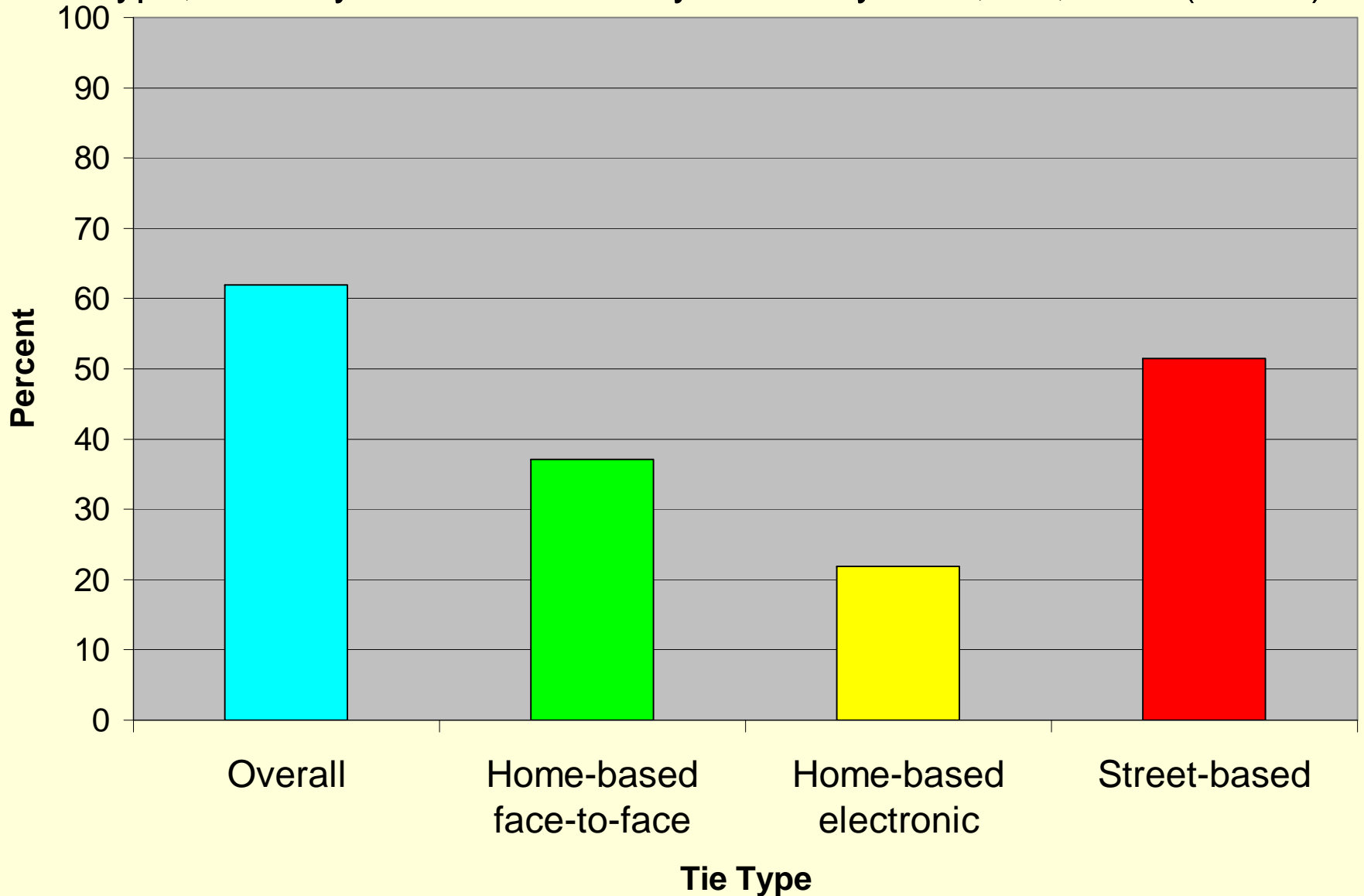


Figure 8: Percent of youth with at least 1 condom user in network by tie type, sexually active homeless youth Hollywood, CA, 2008 (n=105)



Results (Eric is sorry he isn't here)

- Youth who have a condom using, street based peer were 70% less likely to report unprotected sex at their last sexual encounter.
- Youth who have at least one condom using, electronic (internet/phone) peer are 92% less likely to have unprotected sex with multiple partners.
- Youth who have at least one condom using, electronic peer are 3.5 times more likely to report being a condom user in a monogamous relationship.

Implications for HIV Prevention among Homeless Youth

Condom perceptions encourage safer sex

Reference groups matter – street vs. home

Electronic communication (internet & telephone) maintain positive connections

These results are associations



- This summer's feasibility study at MFP
- Draws on existing social networking platforms, like Facebook and MySpace
- Group 7 Outreach Youth, who create digital media, develop the sites, and train other youth to use the sites in a computer lab at the agency
- We're in week 4 of 11 and we're figuring it out?!?!

Thank you for this opportunity.

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