

18-YEAR-OLD PETER

An Investigative Review



MARCH 2017



Under my authority and duty as identified in the *Child and Youth Advocate Act (CYAA)*, I am providing the following Investigative Review regarding the death of an 18-year-old young man who had received Child Intervention Services within two years of his passing.

This is a public report that contains detailed information about children and families. Although my office has taken great care to protect the privacy of the young person and his family, I cannot guarantee that interested parties will not be able to identify them. Accordingly, I would request that readers, and interested parties, including the media, respect this privacy and not focus on identifying the individuals and locations involved in this matter.

In accordance with the *CYAA*, Investigative Reviews must be non-identifying. Therefore, the names used in this report are pseudonyms (false names). Finding an appropriate pseudonym can be difficult, however, it is a requirement that my office takes seriously and respectfully. When possible, we ask those close to the young person to find a name that is meaningful and reflective of who they were. Family members requested that we call this young man, "Peter".

We met with some of Peter's relatives, caregivers and service providers who helped us understand his circumstances. Peter was a young man of First Nation heritage who became involved with Child Intervention Services when he was two years old. He spent most of his childhood with relatives until adolescence, when he was taken out of his community and placed in group care. Peter was the victim of a homicide when he was 18 years old.

This review highlights the impact of trauma and loss on children and transition planning for vulnerable and complex youth as they reach adulthood. I am making one recommendation and re-stating recommendations contained in previous reviews and calling upon government to act on them. Change is needed now.

[Original signed by Del Graff]

Del Graff

Child and Youth Advocate

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alberta's Child and Youth Advocate (the "Advocate") is an independent officer reporting directly to the Legislature of Alberta, deriving his authority from the *Child and Youth Advocate Act (CYAA)*. The Advocate has the authority to conduct investigations into systemic issues related to the death of a child who received Child Intervention Services within two years of their death.

Peter (not his real name)¹ was a young man of First Nation heritage who was a victim of a homicide. He was the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order until he was 18 years old and then he refused further services. Peter passed away approximately nine months after child intervention involvement ended.

The Investigative Review examined two potential systemic issues.

1. Trauma and Loss

Peter was raised in a family and in a community that endured historical and ongoing losses and trauma. Many of these events can be traced back to the effects of colonization on Indigenous people. Some family members, including Peter's parents, struggled to cope and their lives were impacted by violence and addictions. A number of close relatives died; and, as Peter mourned these losses, he started using substances which led to a significant problem with addictions.

Research has identified higher rates of substance use amongst young people struggling with trauma and loss. Although Peter showed periods of resiliency, he was unable to address the underlying causes of his addictions.

In this circumstance, the Advocate is not making any new recommendations on the issue of addressing trauma and loss. A relevant recommendation has been made in a previous Investigative Review, "*17-Year-Old Makayla: Serious Injury*,"² and applies directly to Peter's circumstances and the findings of this review.

1 All names throughout this report are pseudonyms to ensure the privacy of the young person and their family.

2 Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, 2015.

Recommendation

The Ministry of Children's Services and its service delivery partners should ensure that:

- a) Young people involved with Child Intervention Services are assessed to identify the impact traumatic events have had on them;
- b) Case plans should detail interventions to directly address the identified trauma including resources required and expected outcomes; and,
- c) Interventions are reviewed on a regular basis and progress documented.



The Advocate regularly reports on the progress of recommendations at:

<http://www.ocya.alberta.ca/adult/publications/recommendations/>

The Ministry of Children's Services publicly responds to recommendations at:

<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/publications/15896.html>

2. Transition Planning for Vulnerable and Complex Youth

Through his actions, Peter asked for help many times; and, many times he voiced his anxiety about reaching adulthood without a plan, alone and struggling with addictions. There is recognition among service providers that young people leaving the child welfare system are more vulnerable, have more complex needs and require resources. The best outcomes are achieved when youth have access to additional programs and supports, have genuine connections to supportive adults in their community and have increased resources to help them become independent. By turning our attention towards coordinated resource and service delivery, it is possible to close the gap between what is *known* and what is *done* to support young people.³

In the past, the Advocate has examined the issue of transition planning for vulnerable and complex youth, most notably in "*Where do we go from here? - Youth Aging out of Care Special Report.*"⁴ Several recommendations were made that are relevant to Peter's story and some have been acted upon (see Appendix 3).

3 Huebner et al., 2016.

4 Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, 2013.

The Ministry of Children’s Services has adequate policies that speak to transition planning. They identify when planning should begin, areas that need to be addressed, supports required and how often the plan should be reviewed and modified.⁵ Action must be taken to ensure that these policies are acted upon in a more consistent and thorough manner.

Recommendation 1

The Ministry of Children’s Services should ensure that policies regarding transitioning youth out of care are fully understood and implemented. The Ministry must provide information that demonstrates how these policies are implemented consistently across the province.

5 Government of Alberta, 2014.

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

Alberta's Child and Youth Advocate (the "Advocate") is an independent officer reporting directly to the Legislature of Alberta. The Advocate derives his authority from the *Child and Youth Advocate Act (CYAA)*.⁶

The role of the Advocate is to represent the rights, interests and viewpoints of children receiving services through the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*⁷ (*the Enhancement Act*), the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*⁸ (*PSECA*), or from the youth justice system.

Investigative Reviews

Section 9(2)(d) of the *CYAA* provides the Advocate with the authority to conduct Investigative Reviews. The Advocate may investigate systemic issues arising from the death of a child who was receiving Child Intervention Services within two years of their death if, in the opinion of the Advocate, the investigation is warranted or in the public interest.

Upon completion of an investigation under this section of the *CYAA*, the Advocate releases a public Investigative Review report. The purpose is to make findings regarding the services that were provided to the young person and make recommendations that may help prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

An Investigative Review does not assign legal responsibilities, nor does it replace other processes that may occur, such as investigations or prosecutions under the *Criminal Code of Canada*. The intent of an Investigative Review is not to find fault with specific individuals, but to identify key issues along with meaningful recommendations, which are:

- prepared in such a way that they address systemic issue(s); and,
- specific enough that progress made on recommendations can be evaluated; yet,
- not so prescriptive to direct the practice of Alberta government ministries.

6 *Child and Youth Advocate Act*, S.A. 2011, c. C-11.5.

7 *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, RSA 2000, c. C-12.

8 *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act*, RSA 2000, c. P-30.3.

It is expected that ministries will take careful consideration of the recommendations, and plan and manage their implementation along with existing service responsibilities. The Advocate provides an external review and advocates for system improvements that will help enhance the overall safety and well-being of children who are receiving designated services. Fundamentally, an Investigative Review is about learning lessons, rather than assigning blame.

About This Review

The Advocate received information that 18-year-old Peter was the victim of a homicide. Child Intervention Services had involvement with him within two years of his death.

Peter's child intervention records were thoroughly reviewed by the investigative staff from the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (OCYA). The Advocate determined that an Investigative Review was warranted and the Ministry of Children's Services was subsequently notified.

Terms of Reference for the review were established and are provided in Appendix 1. A team gathered information and conducted an analysis of Peter's circumstances through a review of relevant documentation, interviews and research. The team also met with some of Peter's family members.

A preliminary report was completed and presented to a committee of subject matter experts who provided advice related to findings and recommendations. The list of committee members is provided in Appendix 2. Committee membership included an Elder and experts in the fields of trauma and addictions.

About Peter and his Family

Peter was a young man of First Nation heritage. He was a competitive athlete and excelled at many sports. He was a gifted artist and had his artwork published. Peter spent a lot of time with his grandfather who taught him about his culture and traditions. He was often heard singing traditional songs while walking in his community.

Peter was the second oldest of five children.⁹ His parents, Robert and Penny, struggled with addictions and violence. Peter's grandparents lived close by and provided a stable home for Peter and his siblings when his parents were unable to. Peter often said that he felt happiest and safest with his grandparents.

Peter experienced much loss in his young life. His father died when Peter was eight years old; his mother passed away about four years later and his grandparents died before Peter reached adolescence. He started abusing substances and had little stability. He subsequently became the subject of a Permanent Guardianship Order. Child intervention involvement ended shortly after his 18th birthday because he refused further supports and services.

⁹ See Appendix 5 for Genogram.

HISTORY OF INVOLVEMENT WITH CHILD INTERVENTION SERVICES

Peter from Birth to 7 Years Old

Peter's first involvement with Child Intervention Services occurred when he was two years old. Robert and Penny were abusing substances and unable to care for their children. Peter and his siblings were briefly placed with their grandparents and then returned to their parents' care under a Supervision Order.¹⁰ Just before the Order expired, Peter's older sister passed away in a car accident. Her death had a significant impact on the family.

There was no child intervention involvement for approximately four years.

When Peter was six years old, a caseworker and police went to his home and found his parents intoxicated. Peter was also intoxicated and hospitalized for three days. He talked about killing himself and said that his father and older siblings physically abused him. The children were apprehended. When he was discharged from hospital, Peter was placed in foster care for about one month and then moved to his grandparents' care. Penny and Robert completed addictions treatment and their children were returned to them.

Six months later, Child Intervention Services received concerns that the children were in Robert's care and he was drinking. Peter and his siblings went to stay with their grandparents for a short time and then returned to Robert's care.

Peter from 8 to 13 Years Old

When Peter was eight years old, Robert died from substance abuse related causes. Penny continued to struggle with addictions. The children were apprehended and Peter stayed with his grandparents under a Temporary Guardianship Order (TGO).¹¹

When Peter was nine years old, his grandmother passed away following a prolonged illness. About a year later, his grandfather died from natural causes. Peter recalled that his grandfather was very sad after his wife passed away. The TGO was extended until arrangements were made for Peter to live with his Aunt Rhonda. His siblings were cared for by other relatives. Child intervention involvement ended just after Peter's 10th birthday.

10 A court Order with conditions for the parents to keep their child(ren) in their care.

11 An Order in which the court awards custody and guardianship of the child to the Director for a specified period of time.

Shortly before Peter's 12th birthday, Child Intervention Services received a concern that he was using drugs. The caller was advised to discuss this with the adults in Peter's life.

There was no child intervention involvement for the next year. During this time, Penny died by suicide.

Peter from 14 to 16 Years Old

When Peter was 14 years old, numerous concerns were received that he was using alcohol and drugs. He talked about killing himself and was involved in criminal activities.¹² Child Intervention Services was involved to help his Aunt Rhonda manage Peter's behaviours and to receive support for her own addictions. Peter was offered residential addictions treatment but refused. He left his First Nation to stay with his adult brother, Kyle. Child intervention involvement ended.

Two months later, 15-year-old Peter was arrested. Upon his release, he was placed in a rural group home where he remained for about two years. Peter said that he had been happiest when he was with his grandparents. His grandfather's death was a significant loss. He wanted to reconnect to his culture, was interested in seeing an Elder and participating in ceremonies such as smudging.¹³

Shortly after Peter came into care, a Permanent Guardianship Order was granted.

Peter continued to abuse substances and was arrested for assaulting group home staff. He saw a psychiatrist and was prescribed medication. His behaviours were disruptive at school and he often completed work outside of the classroom. Group home staff requested an assessment to clarify Peter's academic and mental health needs.

A year later, 16-year-old Peter was making progress, but continued to have problems with managing his anger and he often left the group home without permission. He excelled in art, sports and was nominated for an academic award. He met with a therapist, attended an addictions support group and visited with relatives.

Just before his 17th birthday, Peter was accused of assaulting a younger relative and his weekend visits with that family ended. He requested contact with other family members, but visits were sporadic.

12 Police were frequently involved with Peter with respect to vandalism, theft, violence and public intoxication.

13 Smudging is a ceremony used by many Aboriginal cultures to cleanse or energize a person, place or object.

Peter at 17 Years Old

When Peter was 17 years old, his brother (Chad) passed away from substance abuse related causes. Peter was angry and upset because he wanted to protect his brother. After Chad's death, Peter tended to be violent, used substances and refused to take his medication or follow routines. Twice, Peter was treated for injuries sustained while he was intoxicated. He spoke to his youth worker and caseworker about feeling abandoned and alone.

Peter told a caseworker he felt that no one cared about him and that he was anxious about turning 18 and having no plan. He wanted to return to his First Nation, but had nowhere to go. Peter continued to be disruptive in school. Group home staff requested an assessment to determine if he would qualify for adult supports.

A few months later, Peter assaulted staff and peers at the group home while intoxicated. He was arrested, charged and then released to the group home on the condition that he not consume alcohol. Peter had difficulty staying sober; and, the following month he was briefly incarcerated. He was subsequently moved to a group home in the city. He maintained phone contact with staff at his previous group home.

Within the first four months in his new placement, there were over 50 Critical Incident Reports. More than half were related to substance abuse. When Peter was intoxicated, he became distraught and aggressive; he talked about killing himself and wanting to be with relatives who had passed away. He was hospitalized three times and placed in secure services¹⁴ once. Peter said that he wanted addictions treatment.

Group home staff were concerned that Peter was about to turn 18 and there was no transition planning to adulthood. He could not stay at the group home beyond his 18th birthday¹⁵ and it was believed that he needed a staffed, semi-independent placement. Peter worried about what his future held.

Approximately one month before his 18th birthday, Peter was moved to a group home in another city. A day after the move, he overdosed because he did not want to live without his girlfriend, who lived in his previous group home.

14 The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* allows for the confinement of a child for up to 30 days for stabilization and assessment when the child is found to be an immediate danger to themselves or others.

15 The placement was limited to youth under the age of 19.

A neuropsychological assessment was completed that found Peter had:

- Addictions
- Depression related to his history of losses
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder¹⁶
- Conduct Disorder¹⁷
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder¹⁸

Peter's cognitive functioning placed him between a Grade 3 to 5 level. He had difficulty understanding verbal communication, following through with tasks and adapting to new situations. The assessment recommended a supported placement into adulthood.

Peter met with his caseworker and said that he did not want services beyond his 18th birthday. His group home placement was extended so that they could revisit his decision.

Peter at 18 Years Old

About three weeks later, Peter met with his caseworker and declined further involvement. He planned to go to school and find employment. He was given information about addictions and mental health resources. He returned to his First Nation and stayed with a relative. Child intervention involvement ended.

After Child Intervention Services Involvement Ended

Peter stayed in his First Nation community but did not have a stable residence. He visited his previous group home and it was observed that he was intoxicated.

Approximately nine months after his 18th birthday, Peter was the victim of a homicide.

16 A chronic condition marked by persistent inattention, hyperactivity, and sometimes impulsivity. ADHD begins in childhood and often lasts into adulthood.

17 A group of behavioural and emotional problems that usually begin during childhood or adolescence. Children and adolescents with the disorder have a difficult time following rules and behaving in a socially acceptable way.

18 A childhood disorder that is characterized by negative, defiant, disobedient and often hostile behaviour toward adults and authority figures primarily. In order to be diagnosed, the behaviours must occur for at least 6 months.

The Terms of Reference for this Investigative Review identified one systemic issue: transition planning for vulnerable and complex youth. Through the review process, trauma and loss was identified as a second systemic issue to be explored.

Trauma and Loss

Peter's life experiences may be related to events that happened in his family and community long before he was born. First Nations in Canada continue to recover from the damage brought by the *Indian Act*; the confinement and segregation of people to reserves; the residential school era; the 60's scoop; and, the child welfare system. These colonial events disrupted the Indigenous way of life, including parenting. Children were uprooted from their families and placed in Euro-Canadian institutions and homes where many experienced violence. They returned to their communities with unresolved trauma and loss.^{19 20}

Some of those who experienced oppression and violence through colonization inflicted abuse onto their own families and communities.^{21 22} Trauma can be passed down through generations, affecting people who did not experience the original events.^{23 24} Peter's mother, Penny, was exposed to substance abuse and violence when she was young; including the murder of her mother. When she and Robert started their family, substance abuse and violence marred their relationship and became more frequent after they lost their young daughter in a car accident.

Unresolved trauma can cause a parent to react to their child with conflict or withdrawal. Consequently, their child may have difficulty regulating their emotions, experience chronic stress and develop symptoms of maladjustment.²⁵ The impact of unresolved trauma on parenting is critical in the first few years of a child's life.²⁶ Peter was exposed

19 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015.

20 Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004.

21 Native Women's Association of Canada, 2011.

22 Creative Spirits, 2016.

23 Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004.

24 Kirmayer, Gone & Moses, 2014.

25 West, 2016.

26 Firestone, 2013.

to adverse childhood experiences through his parents' addictions, exposure to domestic violence and neglect.

Peter's grandparents' involvement lessened the impact of his chaotic upbringing. Cultural connectedness and a stable and committed relationship with an adult can nurture resilience in a child and outweigh other risk factors.²⁷ When his grandparents passed away, Peter lost this connection and was vulnerable to negative influences. He started to abuse substances and associate with peers who were involved in crime.

After Peter was taken into care and removed from his First Nation, his remaining connections became fragile. His brother's death had a profound effect on him. Peter's substance abuse and violent behaviours increased which led to fewer visits with family members. He said he felt alone and unloved. When he moved from one group home to another, he lost ties with peers and staff. A loss is usually accompanied by grief; a state of intense sadness and reaction to the disruption of attachment.²⁸ Those who have multiple losses are more likely to do poorly in school, are vulnerable to depression and exhibit risk-taking behaviours.²⁹ Unresolved grief can lead to more trauma and demonstrate itself in behaviours such as addictions.³⁰

Research has identified higher rates of substance use amongst young people who have experienced trauma. Youth may use alcohol and drugs to numb themselves from the experience of intense emotions.³¹ Substance abuse increases the likelihood of risky behaviours, often resulting in additional layers of trauma. Peter was offered counseling but he did not respond well. The link between trauma exposure and substance abuse is difficult to break without treating them together.³²

In this circumstance, the Advocate is not making any new recommendations on the issue of addressing trauma and loss. A **relevant recommendation** has been made in a previous Investigative Review, "*17-Year-Old Makayla: Serious Injury*,"³³ and applies directly to Peter's circumstances and the findings of this review.

27 Centre for the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2015.

28 Lane, (n.d.).

29 Vaswani, 2008.

30 Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2009.

31 Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse, 2009.

32 The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2008.

33 Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, 2015.

Recommendation

The Ministry of Children's Services and its service delivery partners should ensure that:

- a) Young people involved with Child Intervention Services are assessed to identify the impact traumatic events have had on them;
- b) Case plans should detail interventions to directly address the identified trauma including resources required and expected outcomes; and,
- c) Interventions are reviewed on a regular basis and progress documented.



The Advocate regularly reports on the progress of recommendations at:

<http://www.ocya.alberta.ca/adult/publications/recommendations/>

The Ministry of Children's Services publicly responds to recommendations at:

<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/publications/15896.html>

Transition Planning for Vulnerable and Complex Youth

Through his actions, Peter asked for help many times; and, many times he voiced his anxiety about reaching adulthood without a plan, alone and unloved. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that a young person has a right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously.³⁴ Peter's voice was not heard and this may have contributed to him not wanting services beyond his 18th birthday.

For approximately 20 years the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate has raised concerns about young people transitioning out of care. More recently in 2013, the Advocate released, "*Where do we go from here? Youth Aging Out of Care Special Report*" that speaks specifically to the challenges young people face when leaving government care and includes suggestions to ease that transition. Along with this, several organizations and jurisdictions have made recommendations related to the effective transition of youth to adulthood.^{35 36} There is recognition that young people leaving the child welfare system are more vulnerable, have more complex needs and require specific resources. The best outcomes are achieved when youth have access to

³⁴ United Nations, 1989.

³⁵ Reid & Dudding, 2006.

³⁶ Rutman, Barlow, Hubberstey, Alusik & Brown, 2001.

additional programs and supports, have genuine connections to supportive adults in their community and have increased resources to help them become independent.³⁷

The Advocate hopes that the Ministry of Children's Services will continue to support a comprehensive program that helps vulnerable young people leaving care to succeed. A young person's needs and risks are complex and need to be addressed holistically.³⁸ Exposure to violence, significant deprivation and neglect can impact brain development with lifelong negative consequences. By turning our attention towards coordinated resource and service delivery, it is possible to close the gap between what is *known* and what is *done* to support young people.³⁹ Children must be given the opportunity to not just survive, but to thrive.⁴⁰

The Ministry of Children's Services has adequate policies that speak to transition planning. They identify when planning should begin, areas that need to be addressed, supports required and how often the plan should to be reviewed and modified.⁴¹ Action must be taken to ensure that these policies are acted upon in a more consistent and thorough manner.

Recommendation 1

The Ministry of Children's Services should ensure that policies regarding transitioning youth out of care are fully understood and implemented. The Ministry must provide information that demonstrates how these policies are implemented consistently across the province.

37 Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, 2013.

38 Huebner et al., 2016.

39 Huebner et al., 2016.

40 Huebner et al., 2016.

41 Government of Alberta, 2014.

CLOSING REMARKS FROM THE ADVOCATE

I want to thank all of those who spoke with us and shared their insight into Peter's life and experiences. This helped us understand the systemic issues that arose from his passing.

Peter showed periods of resiliency despite the trauma and loss he experienced. Much of this resiliency came from his relationship with his grandparents. After they died, Peter was persistent in trying to stay connected with those he cared about and asked for help when his future was uncertain. Providing ongoing support to young people is essential to their success.

Peter's death impacted his family, friends and community and I extend my sincere condolences to them. This Investigative Review into his circumstances identified that young people continue to be affected by trauma and loss and that transition planning remains a critical need for young adults. The Ministry of Children's Services needs to act promptly on my recommendations so that young people like Peter, do not experience similar outcomes.

[Original signed by Del Graff]

Del Graff

Child and Youth Advocate

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Authority

Alberta's Child and Youth Advocate (the "Advocate") is an independent officer reporting directly to the Legislature of Alberta. The Advocate derives his authority from the *Child and Youth Advocate Act (CYAA)*. The role of the Advocate is to represent the rights, interests and viewpoints of children receiving services through the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*, the *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* or from the youth justice system.

Section 9(2)(d) of the *CYAA* provides the Advocate with the authority to investigate systemic issues arising from the death of a child who received Child Intervention Services within two years of their death if, in the opinion of the Advocate, the investigation is warranted or in the public interest.

Incident Description

The Advocate was notified that 18-year-old Peter was the victim of homicide. Child Intervention Services' involvement had ended within two years of his death.

The decision to conduct an investigation was made by Del Graff, Child and Youth Advocate.

Objectives of the Investigative Review

To review and examine service and supports provided to Peter specifically related to:

- Transition planning for vulnerable and complex youth

To comment upon relevant protocols, policies and procedures, standards and legislation.

To prepare and submit a report which includes findings and recommendations arising from the Investigative Review.

Scope/Limitations

An Investigative Review does not assign legal responsibilities, nor does it replace other processes that may occur, such as investigations or prosecutions under the *Criminal Code of Canada*. The intent of an Investigative Review is not to find fault with specific individuals, but to identify and advocate for system improvements that will enhance the overall safety and well-being of children who are receiving designated services.

Methodology

The investigative process will include:

- Examination of critical issues
- Review of documentation and reports
- Review of Enhancement Policy and casework practice
- Personal interviews
- Consultation with experts

Investigative Review Committee

The membership of the committee will be determined by the Advocate and the OCYA Director of Investigations. The purpose of convening this committee is to review the preliminary Investigative Review report and to provide advice regarding findings and recommendations.

Chair: Del Graff, Child and Youth Advocate

Members: To be determined but may include:

- An Elder
- A specialist in the area of transitioning young people in care to adulthood
- An expert in the area of mental health

Reporting Requirement

The Child and Youth Advocate will release a report when the Investigative Review is complete.

APPENDIX 2: COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Del Graff, MSW, RSW (Committee Chair)

Mr. Graff is the Child and Youth Advocate for the Province of Alberta. He has worked in a variety of social work, supervisory and management capacities in communities in British Columbia and Alberta. He brings experience in residential care, family support, child welfare, youth and family services, community development, addictions treatment and prevention services. He has demonstrated leadership in moving forward organizational development initiatives to improve service results for children, youth and families.

Elder Ernie Cardinal

Elder Cardinal is from the Saddle Lake First Nation and survived the residential school system from 1954-1958. He left his First Nation to work and raise his family but continues to speak Cree and practice his ancestors' traditions. His biggest achievement is his sobriety since 1982. For many years, Ernie has provided his knowledge and guidance to help Aboriginal people in the correctional system. He is a member of the Parole Board and serves as a cultural advisor at the Edmonton Young Offender Centre.

Robert Calf

Mr. Calf has extensive experience delivering residential and community-based addictions treatment for First Nations youth. He worked at Napi Lodge (South Country) Treatment Centre and was the Director of Kainai Adolescent Treatment Centre which served youth 12-17 years of age. The program utilized a holistic treatment model based on First Nations culture and the 12-step recovery process to assist residents struggling with substance use and addictions.

Kathleen Gorman, BSc, MSW

Ms. Gorman is a certified trauma treatment specialist. She provides individual and group counseling and is a sessional instructor for the University of Calgary Social Work Faculty (Central and Northern Alberta Division). For over 36 years, she has worked with Indigenous communities, government services, and non-profit agencies in the fields of trauma, grief and loss, mental health and addictions, as well as domestic and sexual violence.

Wanda Polzin, MA, RSW, EdD

Dr. Polzin is the Clinical Director at Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Services (CASA) in Edmonton and also has a small private clinical practice. She has over 20 years of experience providing community and in-patient mental health services to children and families and has specialized in the areas of trauma and attachment issues as well as FASD. She shares her knowledge as a presenter and facilitator at many conferences and workshops.

APPENDIX 3: PREVIOUS RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS⁴²

17-Year-Old Makayla - Serious Injury (December 2015)

Recommendation:

1. The Ministry of Human Services and its service delivery partners should ensure that:
 - a. Young people involved with Child Intervention Services are assessed to identify the impact traumatic events have had on them;
 - b. Case plans should detail interventions to directly address the identified trauma including resources required and expected outcomes; and,
 - c. Intervention are reviewed on a regular basis and progress documented.

Progress on this recommendation has not been assessed as of December 8, 2016.

Where do we go from here? - Youth Aging out of Care Special Report (April 2013)

Recommendations:

1. Dedicate and train caseworkers to meet the unique needs of young people leaving care. Identify caseworkers to serve this population, including dedicated time available for young people to access them. Provide training to staff on the needs of this population and how to engage them.

The part of this recommendation concerning training staff has been met although the need to identify and dedicate caseworkers to serve youth leaving care has not been met.

2. Increase awareness of caseworkers, caregivers, and service providers about resources for young people leaving care and support young people to access them. Create greater awareness among caseworkers, caregivers, and agency staff about resources and programs that support transitioning to independence. Build processes for a seamless transition from 'in care' to adult services that are appropriate to their needs.

This recommendation has been met.

⁴² Recommendations and Ministry of Human Services responses can be found on the Office of the Child and Youth Advocates website at http://www.ocy.ca/alberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Recomm_At2016Mar31.pdf.

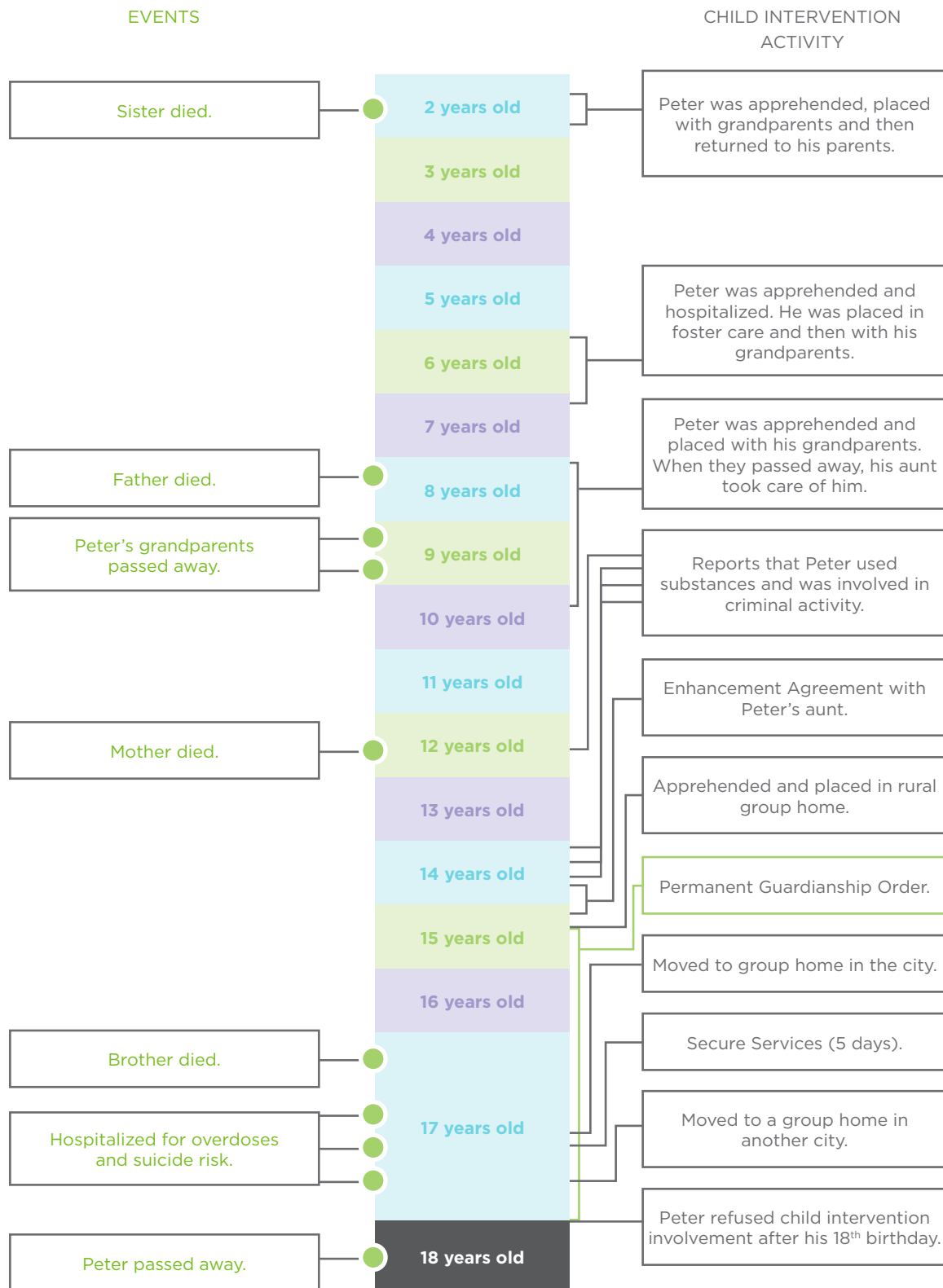
3. Ensure young people leaving care have supportive adult relationships. Work with young people and caregivers so young people develop the relationships and relationship skills they require for independence. Wherever possible, ensure that young people are able to effectively address their interests regarding family relationships.

This recommendation has been met.

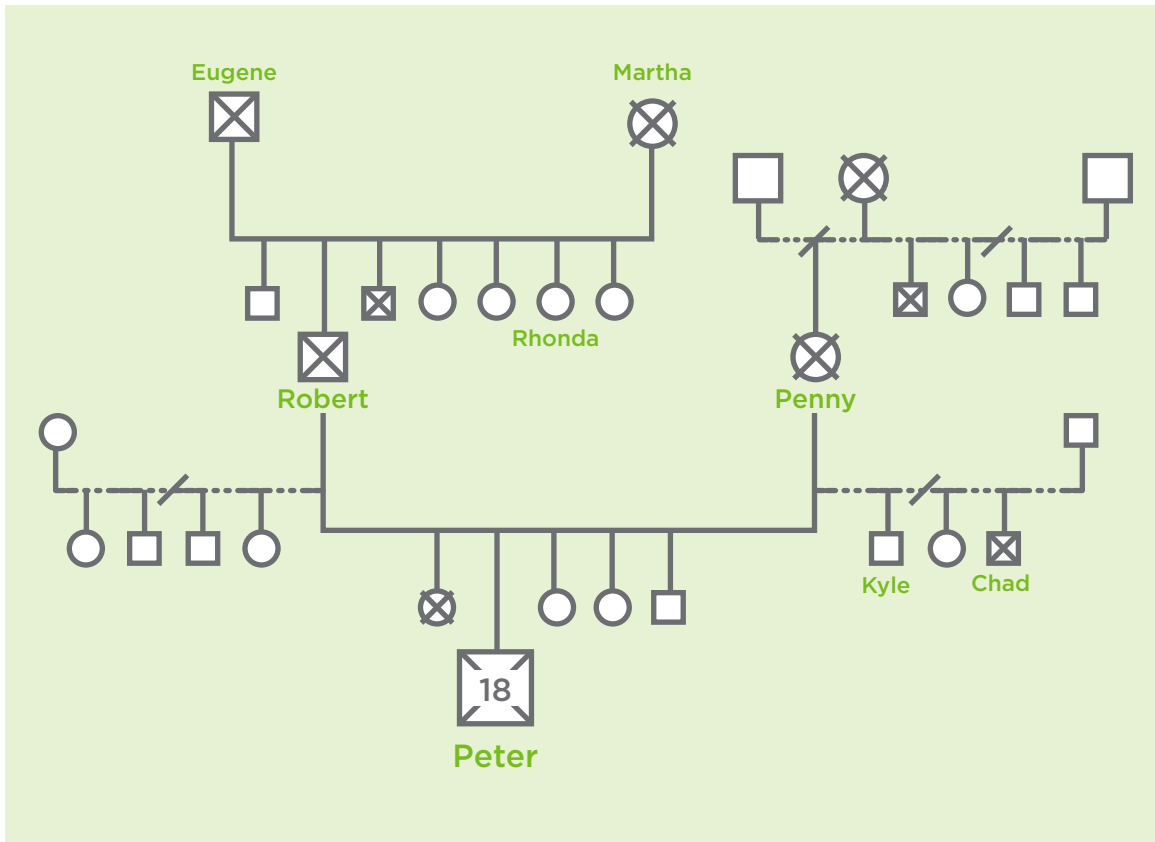
4. Support young people leaving care with access to counseling and/or mental health services and those that require it are transitioned to the adult system. Provide counseling to young people who require it to address the trauma surrounding coming into care and related issues. Work with Alberta Health Services to provide services that meet the mental health needs of young people.

This recommendation has been met.

APPENDIX 4: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS



APPENDIX 5: GENOGRAM



LEGEND



APPENDIX 6: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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