

Responsive Case Management Through the Lens of Lived Expertise

UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS



2 Building Empathy

Understanding Homelessness and building empathy.

Goals

- 1 See the whole person
- 2 Meet them where they are
- 3 Recognize that there may be invisible disabilities
- 4 Use cultural competence
- 5 Never take your eyes off the person's humanity

By Challenger Street Newspaper Austin TX

Glossary Street Slang

By Challenger Street Newspaper

Bender	Binge	Payee	Person who manages your check
Boost	steal	Pokey	Locked up, jail
Busking	A music gig, Busker: Street performer	Real talk	Serious conversation
C.T'd	Been given a criminal trespass	Re up	Restock supplies
Carita's	Caritas' (care-e-tas or car-et-ta's)	Road Dog	Wingman, buddy
Fat	Abundance, in the black A meal place ie. The Church does a feed on Sat	Snipe	Cigarette butt
Frenzy	"Form a line"-don't cause a frenzy by distributing unorganized dispersion of food, etc.	Spangeing	Asking for spare change
Gangeing	Stealing from friends	Squat	Camp spot
Ground score	Something you find on the ground	Street dependent	Youth
Homeless people	Not "The homeless"	Street Family	"Family" on the street, ppl who look out & share
Kick rocks	Leave- said to an x or family member	Survival sex	Trade sex for food, etc
Lurping	Looking under random places-stealing	Train hopping	Riding the rails
Crazy (Nut) check	Disability/SSI/SSDI check	Move it or loose it	Time to grab your stuff now and move

Be able to go with the flow and figure out what person is talking about

Val's Story of homelessness: I left an abusive boyfriend and stayed on a girlfriend's sofa for 10 days. A few months after I got an apartment, I had a dream.

BIO-I have been an advocate for people on the street since 1990, starting with Vietnam veterans.

I did volunteer haircutting in the early 90's for 2 ½ years at Salvation Army & HOBO's (day shelter), helping homeless people gain self esteem & jobs. I let them tell me how it really is on the street, without judgment.

I was the host of a weekly live TV show called "Dialogues About Homelessness" 1995-2000. I was responsible for bring guests from the street & keeping them comfortable enough to speak their voice.

I worked with the Austin Homeless Coalition and the Austin Homeless Task Force in 1996-1998.

I was a Board member at the Former Austin Advocate Newspaper 2001-2011

UT Dell Medical School class originator: Understanding Homelessness (Fall 2018)

A 12 week course to build empathy. I brought lived experience to the classroom and on field trips.

Director/Editor for The Challenger Newspaper, (2011-current) which offers economic independence & operates a mobile office with transparency & inclusion. The Challenger as a 501C-3 non-profit, offers a voice & immediate employment to people who are economically challenged.

Hairstylist (barber) 1982- current Natural hairstylist without chemicals or styling tools.

Morlog

Story

BIO

Marcilas

Story

BIO

Megan

Story

BIO

Morlog

Second round:

What does collaborative case management look like to you?

Speak to what case managers, friends, and neighbors have done to help you the most. Was it connecting to a specific resource? Was it them providing a listening ear? Was it immediate assistance (food, supplies, etc.) or state resources (vouchers, medical care)? Think more about what the perfect homeless service provider would be!

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Examples of good techniques of case management:

We're changing the algorithm!

At first, use small steps. It gives everyone a chance to gain trust and get familiar with each other.

Ask the client what they see as solutions, instead of putting them through the same drill as others. Be flexible to different success rates. Let the client set the tone? Success is moving forward at the persons rate, so we don't have to say, they wouldn't comply. Who is not complying?
Empower them by listening to their ideas and thinking.

Changing the algorithm takes pivoting and being able to change directions.

Our citizens want unhoused people off the street and so far, not many have been successful at leading chronic homeless people to services.

Ending homelessness is not gonna work if we just rehouse new homeless people (with less than 6 months experience)

and keep sending hard to serve unhoused people back out to fend for them selves.

Invisible disabilities keep service resistant people from moving forward.

After an initial interview of needs, consider the Key First Housing program.

For some it's obvious they've been on the street more than a year. Have them fill out their paperwork on their new kitchen table.

At the end of the interview ask the client, when can you come back? Instead of expecting them to come back Tues at 2 pm.

They may have had to put big effort and timing to come to their appointment today, to get a clean outfit or do laundry, to get a shower can take half a day. May have court dates.

Document progress and give a copy.

Show you have boundaries
Wait till timing is right.

May I ask a personal question? (This allows a person to prepare to protect.)

After trust is built, you can jump right in and ask, assuming questions, to Veterans (with PTSD).
What is your worst memory of the war?

Re encapsulate it, with a question about what are you looking forward to?

Pets:

Tools:

Look at each person as a point of light. They're light may be dim, so it's your job to blow on their light to make it burn brighter.

Admit your mistakes, it builds a lot more trust.

Sometimes say nothing, just listen, even if it's uncomfortable. Let the client have time to formulate their thought. We all know PTSD talks at the last minute, just before it's time...

It becomes teamwork.

Helping is not to get pleasure of what you think needs to happen. The good feeling comes when the client makes progress after you've met them where they are.

? Q & A ?

? ? ? ? ?

MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS /INVISIBLE DISABILITY PRIMARY SOURCE DATA

Gathered by Val Romness and read to the TX Legislature House Committee on Mental Health 8-17-2016

20 people with mental health issues contributed to these bullet points. Most homeless people have some level of mental health issues just from not sleeping.

- Housing/ apartments/group homes
- More counseling/more case workers/ liaison advocates, (w/o judgement) They need to know homeless people have severe trauma, invisible disabilities, cognitive disabilities, head injuries, associative disorders. More training for empathy.
- ie: councilors/ case workers shouldn't ask a homeless person "Why are YOU homeless?" if the client doesn't look or act homeless. Stop interrogating clients like cops. Take out the barrier between client / councilor.
- More in-patient beds (ie Shoal Creek) available on shorter notice
- Need more officers trained in mental health and deescalating the scene, 160 officers trained now in C.I.T. (Crisis Intervention Team) To reach one call 512-472-HELP
- More humane treatment: seriously-tranquilizer darts (David Joseph who ran naked wouldn't have had to die) need to replace torture & traumatizing OC spray (olestra capsaicin) now used by police. Their spray injures retinas, you can't rinse it out because it makes it worse and spreads.

From an internet search: Even more worrying is the complete lack of interest by the authorities in the lethal impact that pepper spray has on individuals who have taken stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines. The active ingredient in pepper spray, capsaicin potentates the toxicity of cocaine astronomically, making cocaine and pepper spray a lethal combination. In the two years following California's 1992 adoption of

capsaicin based

pepper spray nineteen of the twenty-six deaths caused by pepper spray also involved the use of stimulants like cocaine (9 involved methamphetamine, 6 cocaine, 3 methamphetamine plus cocaine, and 1 pseudoephedrine), 79% of those deaths occurred within one hour (Mendelson et al, 2009). This research is supported by animal research in which capsaicin pushed mortality levels through the roof in rats administered with cocaine (Mendelson et al, 2009). <http://neurobonkers.com/2011/11/22/pepper-spray-cocaine-death/>

- Better reintegration to society after mental health hospitalization: Companion field trips (one on one) for those institutionalized to reintegrate comfort in being back in society, Simple outings, a movie, grocery shopping, bus riding etc.
- Follow up study on President Reagan's release of mental health patients in 1985. Where are they today? How's life on their own?
- Truth and accountability audits to see where the money is going. Make money trails more efficient.
- Pet recognition: Train officers to deal with service animals. People with mental health issues need unconditional love, frequently services are so harshly delivered. Accommodate pets as family, don't euthanize the pets!
- Health care availability is hard to acquire if you're on the streets, and not very understanding. The whole process is too difficult to maneuver with PTSD, anxiety disorder or TBI (traumatic brain injury)
- Intimidation and bullying by caseworkers, service providers furthers the discouragement often following someone with mental health/ invisible disabilities.

You can view the hearing:

http://tlchouse.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=37&clip_id=12090
Wed August 17 Val was last speaker at 3 hrs

Recommended Resources

from Challenger Street Newspaper

READING

Challenger Street Newspaper

Join: Ryan Dowd- ryan@homelesslibrary.com emails-Great tips in

how to be safe encountering an unhoused person.

Homeless No More By Alan Graham

Looking Up From The Bottom Line By Richard R. Troxell

All The Dead Lie Down By Mary Willis Walker

Fly Away Home By Eve Bunting and Ronald Himle (Kids view point)

Travels With Lisbeth By Lars Eighner (LGBTQ+)

Megan's recommendations:

Risking Connection: A Training Curriculum for Working with Survivors of Childhood Abuse

Creating Sanctuary: Toward the Evolution of Sane Societies

Together: The Healing Power of Connection In a Sometimes Lonely World

Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities

The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non Profit Industrial Complex

(It is a compilation of essays, specifically the writings "Social Service or Social Change" by Paul Kivel and "Non Profits and the Autonomous Grassroots" by Eric Tang)

VISUAL

Challenger Documentary: Voices From the Street (27 min)

Movie: The Glass Castle

Art From the Streets Documentary

Community First! Village documentary

When the Light Turns Red By Patrick Hennessey

Austin Public Libraries' 10, 30 or 90 min education about Homelessness

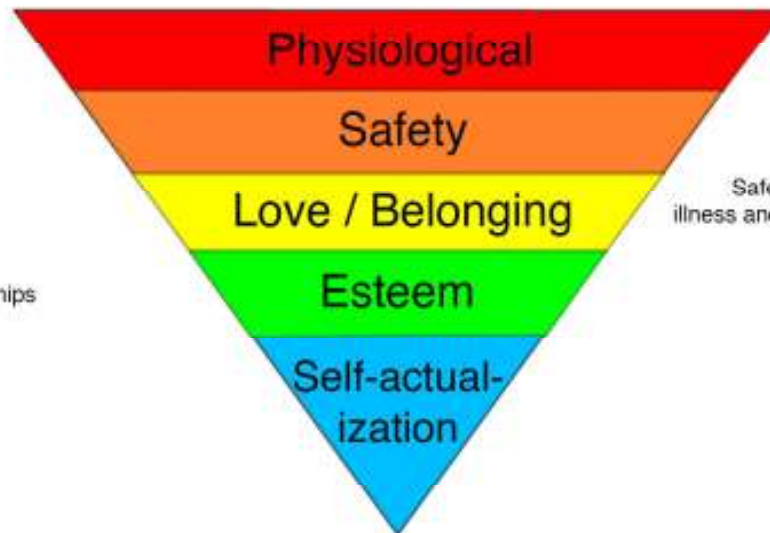
Dialogues About Homelessness TV Show ACTV 1995-2000

Bouldin Creek Greenbelt Family Documentary By Cindy Brettschneider

Fisher King- Robin Williams stars

Air, water, food
Shelter, Clothing
Sexual Instinct

Family
Intimacy
Friendship
Form and Maintain
Significant Relationships



Physical Safety
Economic Safety
Personal Security
Financial Security
Health and Well-being
Safety net against accident,
illness and their adverse impacts

Self-respect
Valued by others

Must master previous levels
Desire to accomplish everything one can
Realization of one's full potential

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Build your skills and your success rate & money will go further!

TAKE 5 MINUTES TO REVIEW THIS SESSION