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*The 2023 Texas Conference on Ending
Homelessness*

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Understanding the Influence of Social Integration on the Formerly Homeless



House of Bags

Value
Impact
Builds

FOCUS OF TODAY'S DIALOGUE: To understand and contemplate the value of housing and why and how the type of housing impacts self-sufficiency, quality of life, and housing retention and builds a sense of community.

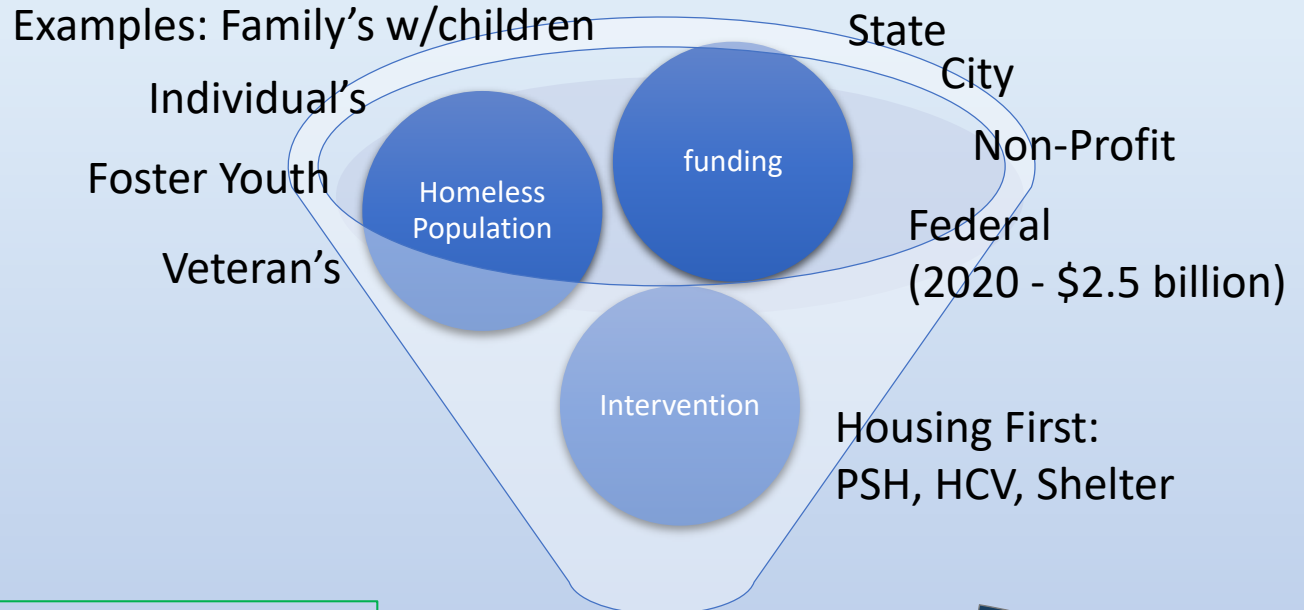
Crossing the Finish Lines Starts the Beginning of a New Journey

*Results, observations, and inspirations from interviewing the formerly homeless
And studying homeless housing models*



Perspective on Homelessness

Focus of Study



New Homeless Numbers Continue to Grow

Housing First: Success Rate 75%

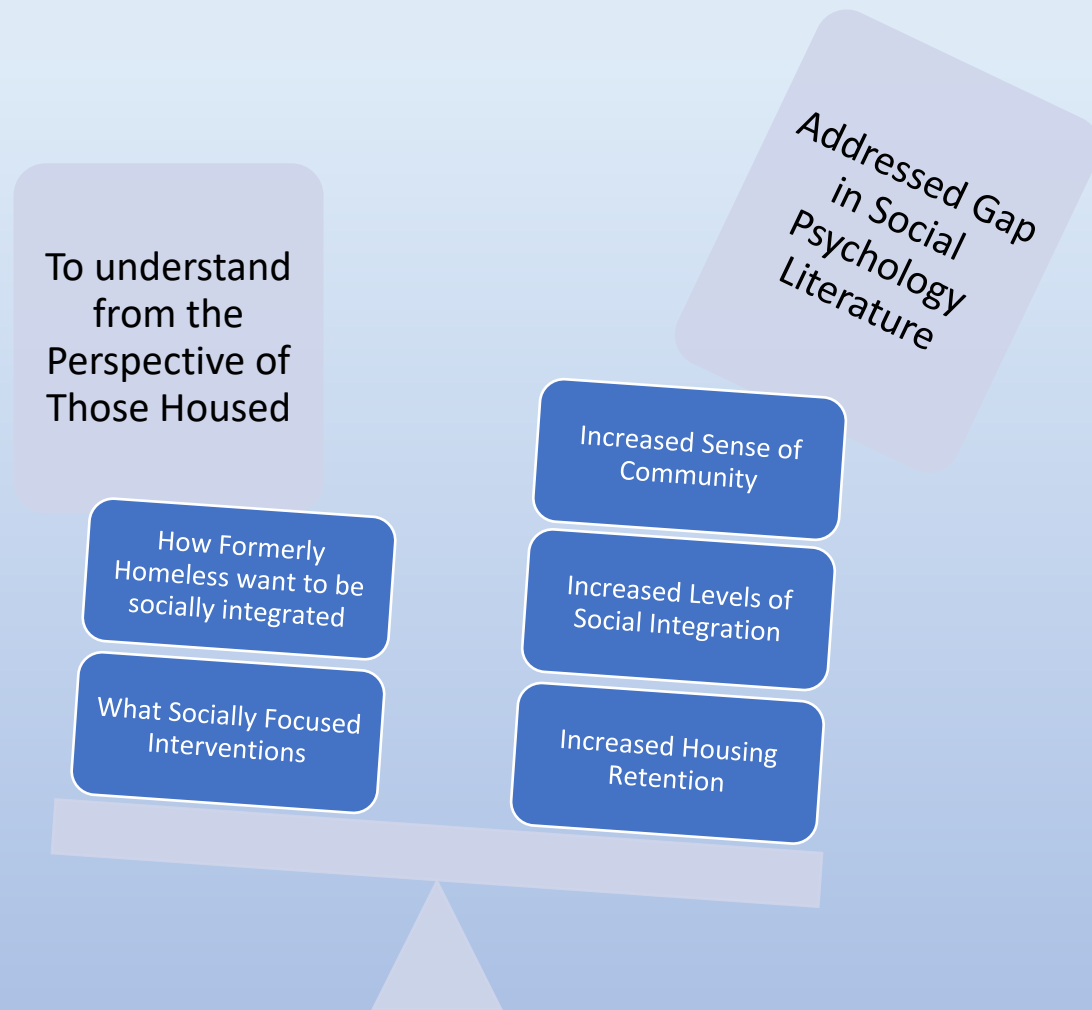
- Success and detriments
- Mitigate risk of returning to homeless cycle
- How can we leverage the results
- New Vision



Homeless Cycle



Purpose of Study



Study on Housed Formerly Homeless:

To Understand the Influence of Social Integration on the Formerly Homeless

Problem: As homelessness continues to increase, the current approach has not met expectations to mitigate the risk of returning to homelessness

Result: People return to homeless; little development of social networks; isolation

Social Implications: Time to re-evaluate our approach and understand how the formerly homeless want to be integrated into the community; increase sense of community

Future Goal: Housing sustainability, increased well-being, self-sufficiency, sense of community

Who:

15 participants
Housed 24 – 60 months
Housing First Program
HCV Voucher

Design Approach:

Qualitative Phenomenological
Approach





Design Framework

- **What:** A qualitative phenomenological design
- **Why:** Exploring a current phenomena (Creswell, 2013)
- **How:** Gather data through interviews, based on the experiences of the participants
- **Who:** Housed, Formerly Homeless

Target Population

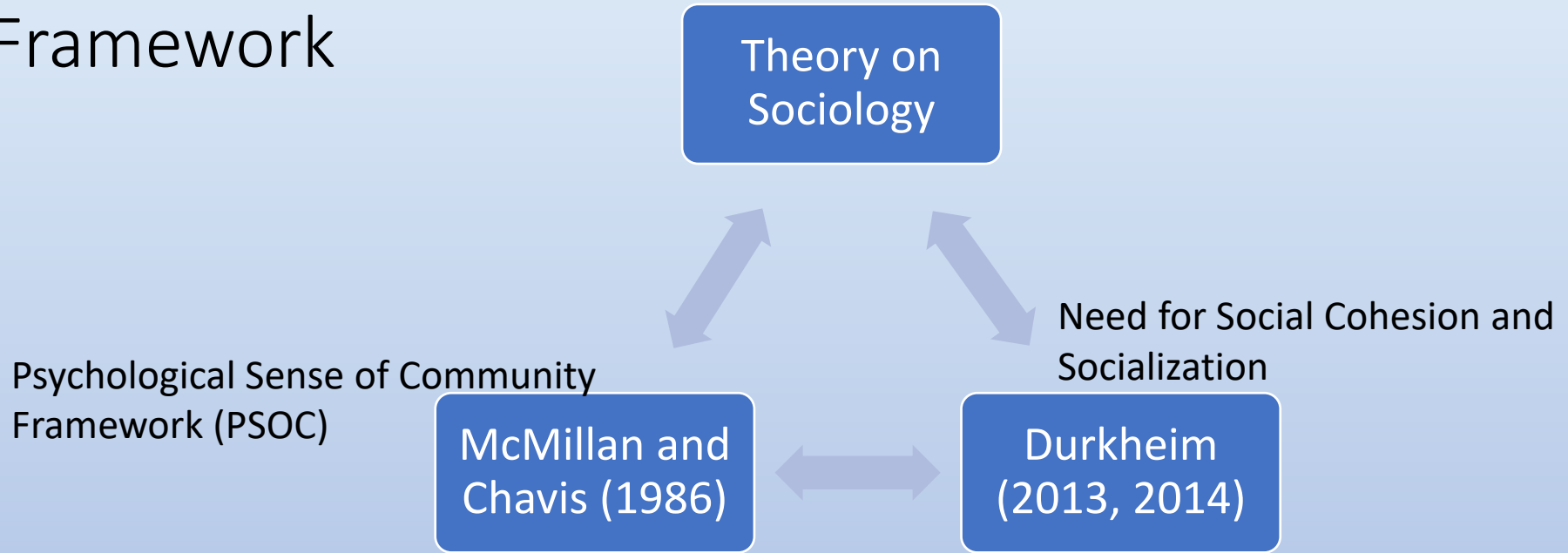


10/23/2023



- 15 formerly homeless individuals Southwest Texas
- (15/724)
- Housed between 24 and 60 months
- In a Housing First program
- With a section 8 voucher

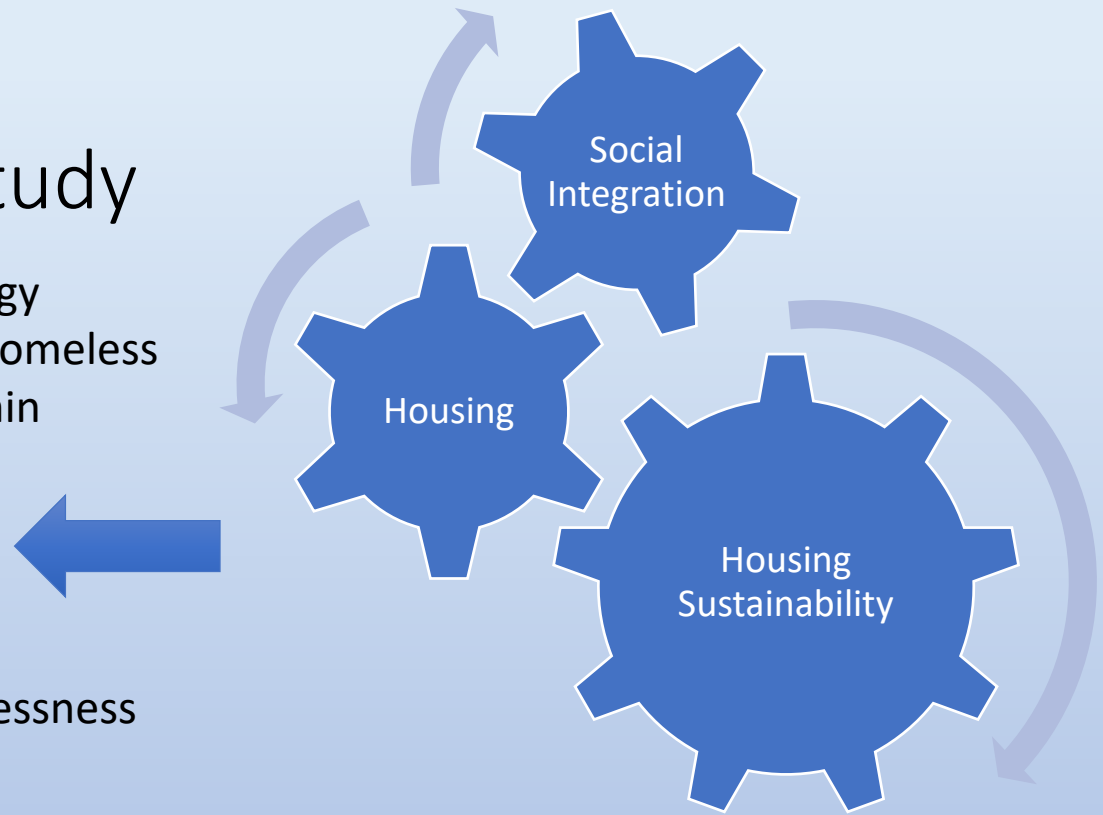
Theoretical Framework



Significance of Study

Address the gap in social psychology literature - how do the formerly homeless want to be socially integrated within the community

Reduce number of
People returning to homelessness



The results of the study have the potential to enhance current strategies and make a significant contribution to the future of how homelessness is addressed. If social integration in concert with housing can improve the long-term sustainability of those who are housed, increased socialization may have the potential to reduce the number of people who leave their housing and return to homelessness



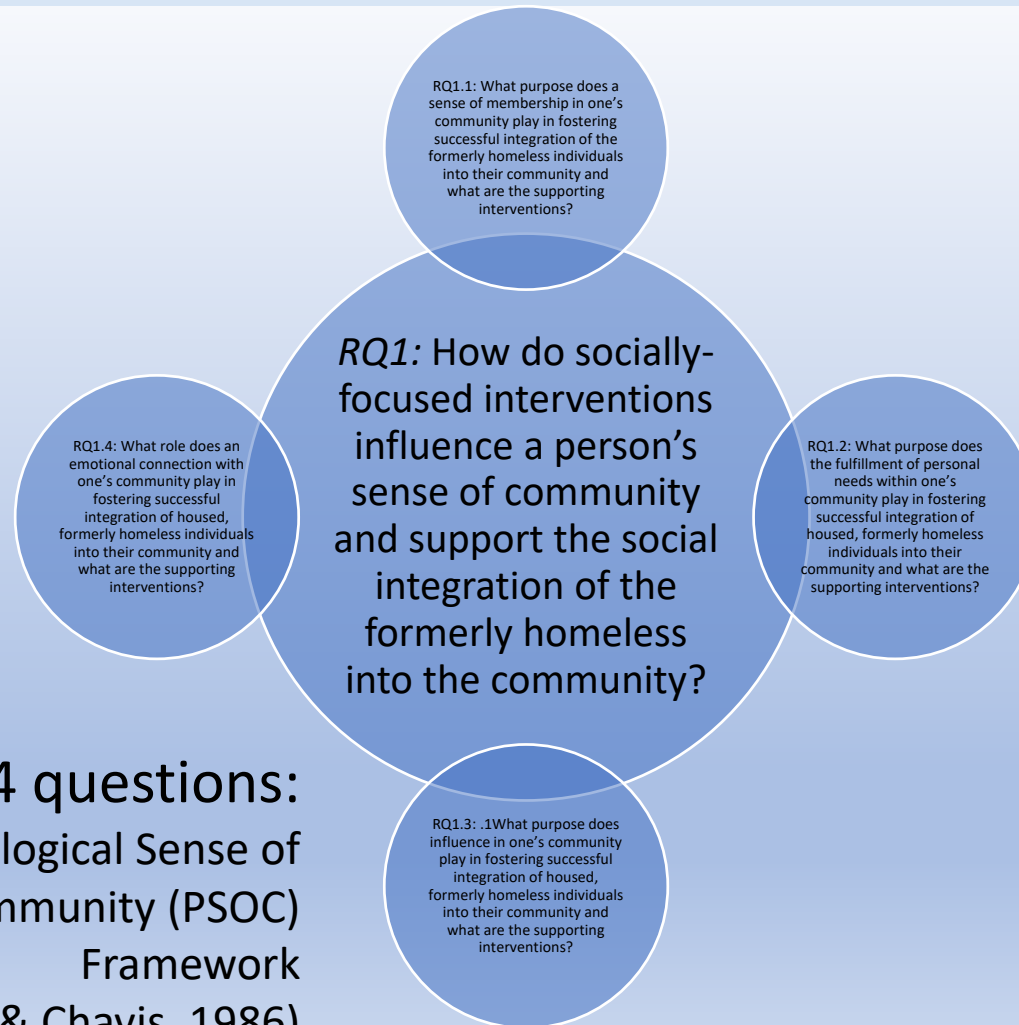
Significance to Social Change

Bring Awareness of Value of Social Integration



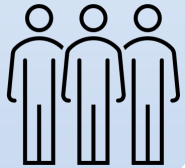
Increase Overall Well-Being of the Formerly Homeless

Qualitative Survey Tool Questions



Subdivided into 4 questions:
Based on Psychological Sense of
Community (PSOC)
Framework
(McMillan & Chavis, 1986)

Sub Research Questions: Psychological Sense of Community



SENSE OF MEMBERSHIP

RQ1.1: What purpose does sense of membership a in one's community play in fostering successful integration of the formerly homeless individuals into their community and what are the supporting interventions?



SENSE OF INFLUENCE

RQ1.3: .1What purpose does influence in one's community play in fostering successful integration of housed, formerly homeless individuals into their community and what are the supporting interventions?



NEEDS FULFILLMENT

RQ1.2: What purpose does the fulfillment of personal needs within one's community play in fostering successful integration of housed, formerly homeless individuals into their community and what are the supporting interventions?



EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

RQ1.4: What role does an emotional connection with one's community play in fostering successful integration of housed, formerly homeless individuals into their community and what are the supporting interventions?



Assumptions

1. Participants will provide honest answers

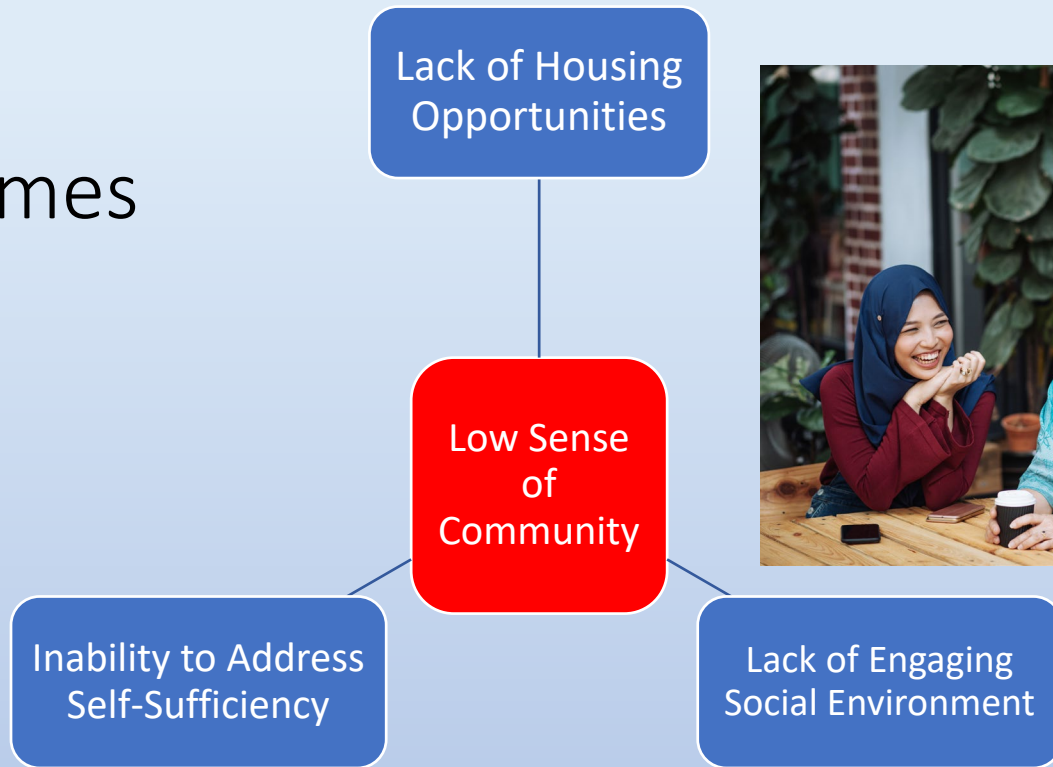
2. Homeless deal with loss of housing and disaffiliation from social networks

3. Those housed between 24 and 60 months will have increased social integration

4. Housing First has not met expectations for increased social integration



Themes



LOW

Sense of Community

HIGH

Low Housing Retention
Isolation
Exclusion
Housing Stability

High Housing Retention
Engagement
Inclusion
Housing Sustainability
Self-Sufficiency
Well-Being

Results



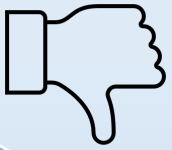
- ✓ **Quality Housing:**
Build Rootedness
Sense of Membership
Personal Needs

- ✓ **Community Engagement:**
Builds Sense of Membership
Emotional Attachment

- ✓ **Training/Job Programs**
Sense of Membership
Personal Needs



Results – RQ1.1: Sense of Membership



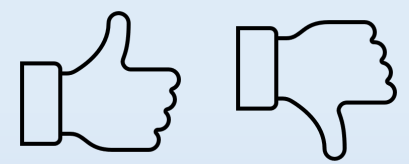
- Housing was multi-dimensional
 - Face value was shelter
 - Defines a community for members
- Psychosocial need to be in caring environment with peers
 - To be able to engage with people with common interests
 - Senior housing
 - Walkable
 - Green Spaces
 - Activities to participate in
 - Miss their old friends
 - No sense of membership

SENSE OF MEMBERSHIP

RQ1.1: What purpose does sense of membership a in one's community play in fostering successful integration of the formerly homeless individuals into their community and what are the supporting interventions?



Results: RQ1.2 Needs Fulfilment



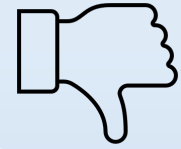
- Housing changed their life
- Wanted quality housing
Vs. just a roof
- Rational choice to conform
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of peers
- Valued housing over homelessness – but wanted quality housing
- Needs fulfillment of housing accomplished but not of quality housing
- Having housing can not assume social engagement

NEEDS FULFILLMENT

RQ1.2: What purpose does the fulfillment of personal needs within one's community play in fostering successful integration of housed, formerly homeless individuals into their community and what are the supporting interventions?



Results: RQ1.3 Sense of Influence



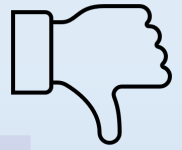
- Lack of quality housing = no community attachment
- Did not know neighbors
- Isolation
- No attachment to community
- No interaction with neighbors
- In fear of losing voucher and returning to homelessness
- Did not know how they could move forward
- No interaction with support network

SENSE OF INFLUENCE

RQ1.3: .1What purpose does influence in one's community play in fostering successful integration of housed, formerly homeless individuals into their community and what are the supporting interventions?



Results: RQ1.4 Emotional Connection



No attachment to the
Community where they
lived

Did not have anything in
common with
their neighbors

They remembered what
it was like to have an
emotional connection
with friends

One had a connection
with the children – teach
them values

Experienced little
emotional connection

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

RQ1.4: What role does an emotional connection with one's community play in fostering successful integration of housed, formerly homeless individuals into their community and what are the supporting interventions?



Recommendations



How do Findings Relate to the Literature

Tsemberis, S. (2010). *Housing First: The Pathways Model to End Homelessness for People with Mental Illness and Addiction*. Center City, MN: Hazelden.

Tsai, J. & Rosenheck, R.A. (2012). Conceptualizing social integration among formerly homeless adults with severe mental illness. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 40 (4), 456-467.

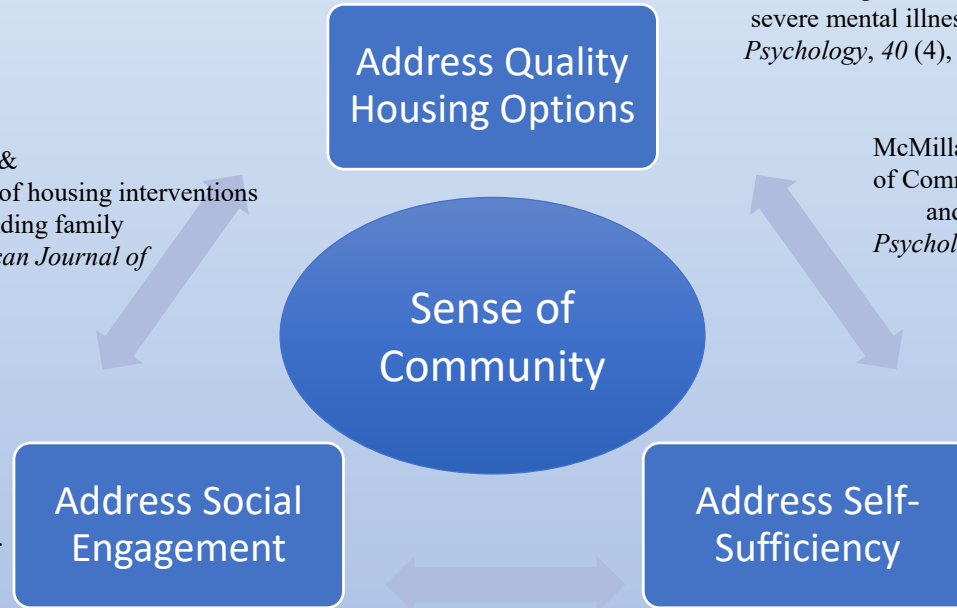
Bassuk, E. L., DeCandia, C. J., Richard, M. K., & Tsertsvadze, A. (2014). The effectiveness of housing interventions and housing and service interventions on ending family homelessness: A systematic review. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 84(5), 457-474.

McMillan, D.W. & Chavis, D.M. (1986). Sense of Community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14.

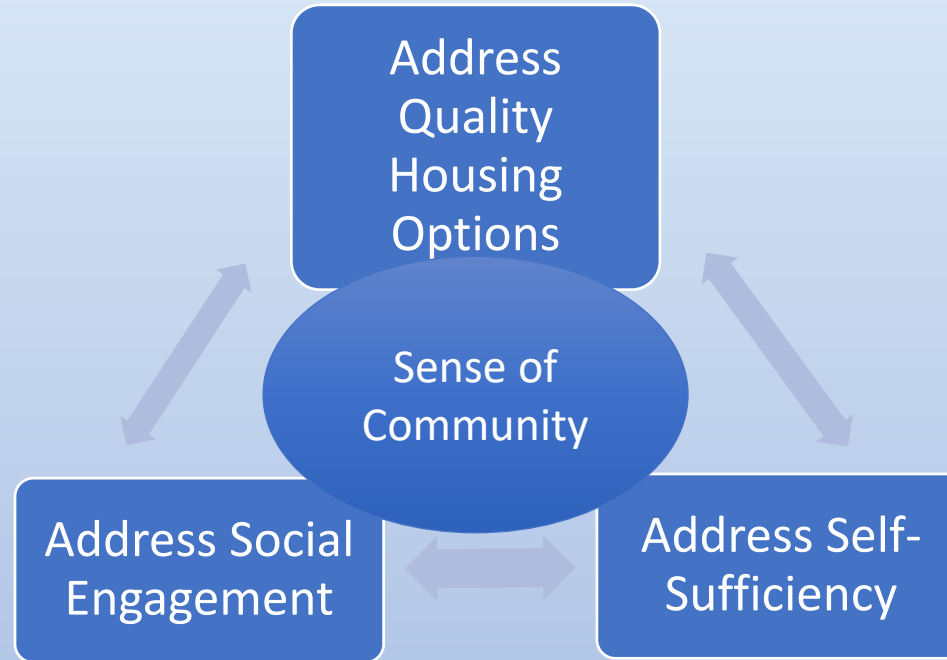
Glynn, T.J. (1981). Psychological sense of community: Measurement and application. *Human Relations*, 34, 780-818.

Tsai, J., Mares, A.S. & Rosenheck, R.A. (2012). Does housing chronically homeless adults lead to social integration? *Psychiatric Services*, 63 (5), 427-434.

Sarason, L.G., Levine, H.M., Basham, R.B., & Sarason, B.R. (1983). Assessing social support: The social support questionnaire. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44, 127-139. *Adult Residential Care Journal*, 8 (2), 1994.



How do Findings Relate to the Theoretical Framework



Durkheim, E. (2013). *The rules of sociological method and selected texts on sociology and its method*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Durkheim, E. (2014). *The division of labor in society*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

McMillan, D.W. & Chavis, D.M. (1986). Sense of Community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14.

Perkins, D.D. & Long, D.A. (2002). Neighborhood sense of community and social capital. *Psychological Sense of Community: Research, Applications, and Implications* (pp.291-318), New York: Plenum

Limitations of the Study

- Increase population size to trend data
- Potential interview bias was mitigated by use of phone interviews
- Future studies may consider different demographic data: foster youth, women with children and veterans.
- Phone interviews increased participation and enforced consistency
- PSCO survey tool was designed for this study and will be available for use
- Data presented to peers during process to validate data integrity






Recommendations for Future Research

- Data collection from same target population from different sources using same requirements
- Data collection from different cohorts of homeless – Foster Care, Veteran’s, Families with Children, using same requirements
- Industrialize the qualitative tool and design comparable quantitative tool





Social Change Implications

Mitigate

Mitigate the risk of returning to homelessness

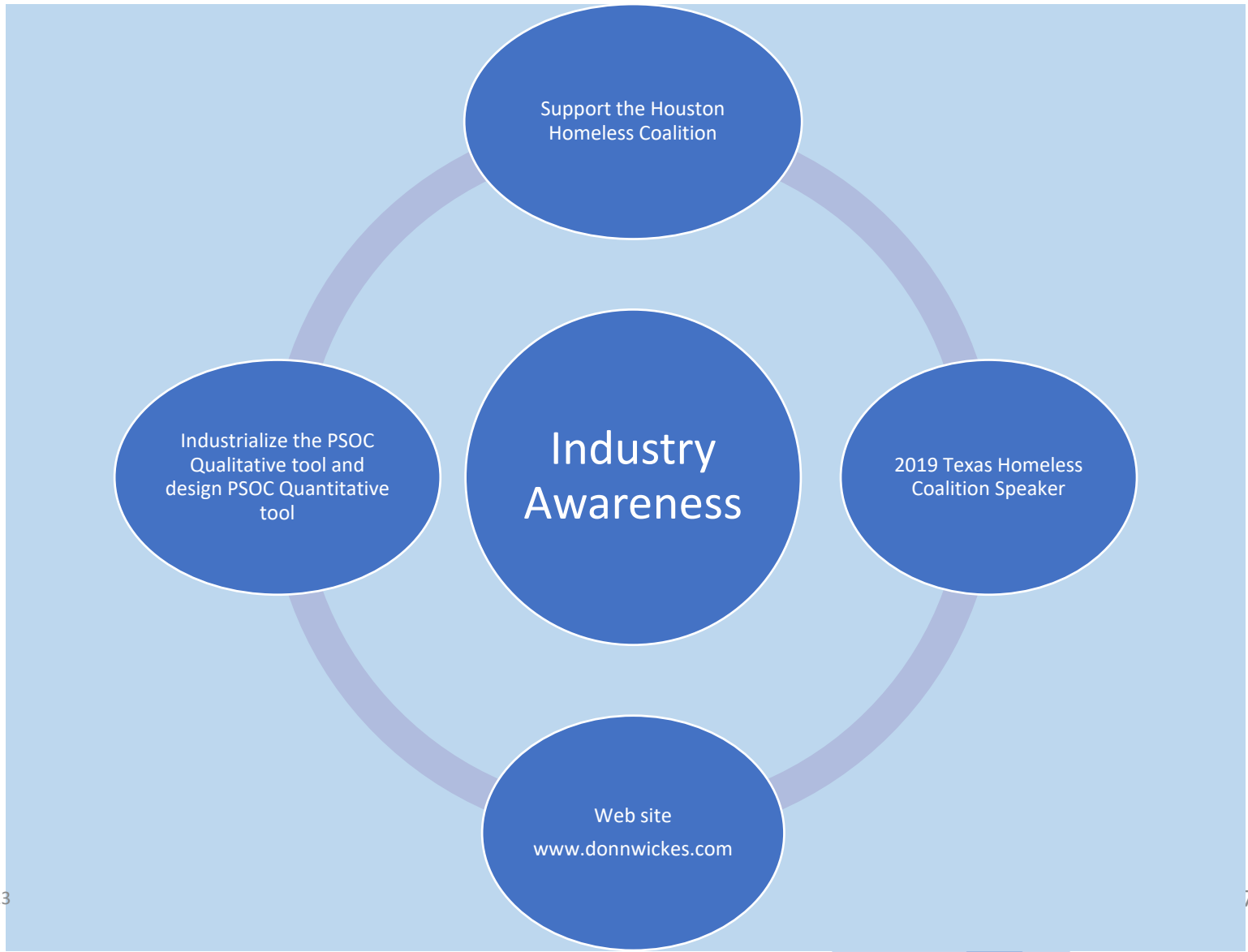
Increase

Increase social awareness of the value of Social Integration

Bridge

Bridge the gap between social integration and housing to ensure housing sustainability

Stakeholder Communication



Conclusions

New Lens for looking at homelessness in the 21st century:

3 Pillars Housing Sustainability:

Housing Opportunities, Engaging Environments and Employment

Promote Social Integration as the thread that weaves housing into communities to build a sense of community and ensure long-term housing sustainability





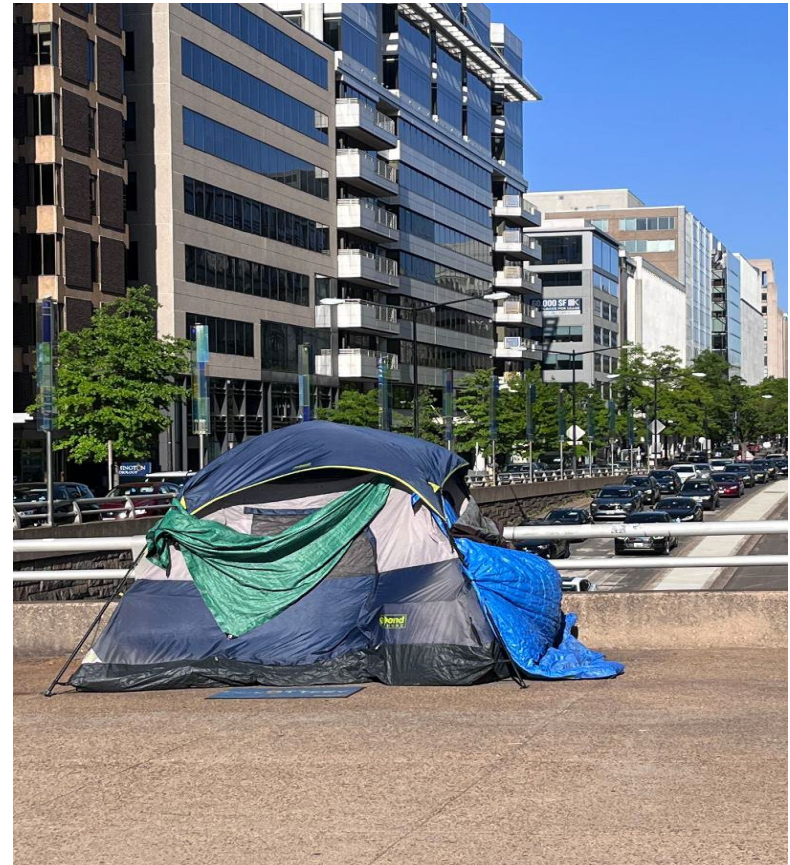
Crossing a finish line starts the beginning of a new journey!

We are at an interesting crossroad where we can apply what we have learned to move down a new path!

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- Bassuk, E. L., DeCandia, C. J., Richard, M. K., & Tsertsvadze, A. (2014). The effectiveness of housing interventions and housing and service interventions on ending family homelessness: A systematic review. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 84(5), 457-474.
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More Information and Slides can be found at www.donnawickes.com



Thank you!

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