



FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE TO LEADERSHIP: TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS

Lindsay Kocen RSPS, MHPS, PSS

Ebby Green MPA

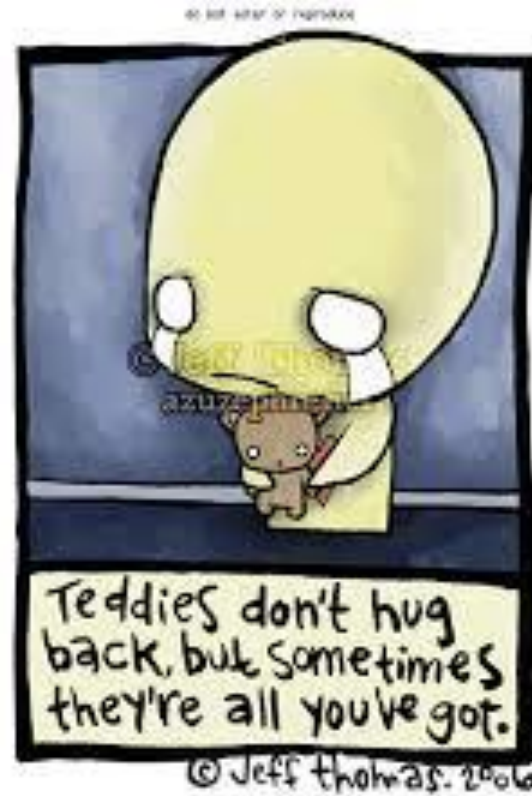
AGENDA

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Early Struggles and Becoming Unhoused**
- 3. What Changed**
- 4. Service Navigation**
- 5. From Stability to Leadership**
- 6. Importance of Community**
- 7. Creating A Homeless Coalition**
- 8. Final tips & takeaways**
- 9. Questions/Closing**

Introduction

- My name is Lindsay Kocen, RSPS, MHPS, PSS
- Recovery Support and Mental Health Peer Specialist, Peer Specialist Supervisor
- UTHHealth Houston RSPS Fellowship, a statewide peer training and workforce program
- I share my story to reduce stigma, humanize homelessness, and highlight recovery

Early Struggles and Becoming Unhoused



Round Rock



What Changed?
I was given a HOME!



SERVICES I NAVIGATED

- FASFA (College app)
- Austin Community College- accommodations, free childcare
- Child Protective Services
- Medicaid, Food stamps, WIC, Wilco Cares Insurance
- Lonestar Circle of Care: Sliding Scale Psychiatric, medical, dental, pharmacy
- Pell Grants & Student Loans,
- Round Rock Area Serving Center: Utility Assistance
- Food Pantries
- Psychiatric Hospitalization
- Major Injuries
- How to live in a home and raise a baby

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FROM STABILITY TO LEADERSHIP: FINDING A PURPOSE IN PEER SUPPORT



CREATING A HOMELESS COALITION

EBBY GREEN, MPA

• STEPS

- Identify Needs
- Visit with housing providers, local entities, etc.
- Work with Local COC
- Establish Goals
- Coordinated Entry

BARRIERS

- Lack of Resources
- Competition for Funding
- Unrecognized Need
- Legality
- NIMBY

Wilco Homeless Coalition

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

Engaging Partners

Partnerships

Identifying Community Needs



Terry Cook
Precinct One
Commissioner



Proclamation of

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Point in Time Count (2019+)

Homeless Awareness event (2023)

National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day (2024)

Wilco Proclamation



WHEREAS, for over 25 years the National Coalition for the Homeless and National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness have sponsored National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this proclamation is to educate the public about the many reasons people are hungry and homeless, including the shortage of affordable housing in Williamson County for very low income residents; and to encourage support for homeless assistance service providers, as well as community service opportunities for students and school service organizations; and

WHEREAS, there are many organizations committed to sheltering and providing supportive services as well as meals and food supplies to people experiencing homelessness, including The Round Rock Serving Center, The Caring Place, Neighbors Serving Neighbors, Shepherd's Heart, the Hutto Resource Center, Brighter Days Food Pantry, Operation Liberty Hill, Opportunities for Williamson and Burnet Counties, and so many more faith-based and non-profit organizations across the county; and

WHEREAS, this Commissioners Court recognizes that hunger and homelessness continues to be a serious problem for many individuals and families in Williamson County; and

WHEREAS, as an example, the following numbers from The Caring Place in Georgetown indicate the great need across Williamson County:

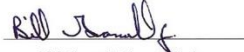
- 8,206 individuals served so far in 2023, which is 27% more than ALL of 2022
- 25,339 trips to the food pantry in 2023, up 123% since this time last year
- \$737,870 in total financial assistance (rent, mortgage, utilities, transportation, medical) in 2023 to 1,031 unique families; and

WHEREAS, the intent of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week is consistent with the activities of our local organizations;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Williamson County Commissioners Court hereby proclaims November 11 – 18, 2023 as National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Commissioners Court encourages all citizens to recognize that many people do not have housing and need support for residents and private/public nonprofit service entities alike.

Passed by Commissioners Court and Signed on this date: Nov 7, 2023


Bill Gravell, County Judge

On behalf of the Williamson County Commissioners Court Members

FINAL TIPS & TAKEAWAYS

- Most are only a few paychecks away from being unhoused
- Volunteer
- Attend coalition meetings- meeting is held monthly via zoom
- Importance of involving those with lived/living experience
- Get involved in the PIT count



Thank you!

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Wilco Homeless
Coalition