Beyond Housing: Creating a Sense of Place after Later Life Homelessness

Christine A. Walsh; Victoria Burns, Jennifer Hewson; Natalie St-Denis & Hillary Chapple

Panel: Homelessness in Later Life: Insights and Experiences from Across Canada
Beyond Housing: Creating a sense of place with formerly homeless older adults in Calgary, Alberta
SSHRC IDG 2017-2019
Telus Sprak

1. Provide some background to set the stage for the research
2. Showcase the brief video documentary
3. Share one co-researcher’s perspective
Defining older homelessness

Define “older”

Define “homeless”
Who are older homeless adults?

• 235,000 homeless per year in Canada (Gaetz et al., 2013).
• Definitions of homelessness: absolute to relative
• “Older”: Age 50+ (premature aging)
• Constitutes from 2% to 49% of the homeless populations
The population of older homeless individuals are rising, yet ‘falling through the cracks’

The number of older adults (50-64) and seniors (65+) experiencing homelessness is growing (Gaetz, Dej, Richter, & Redman, 2016)

Invisible in Aging in Place policies (WHO, 2013, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, 2014)

Invisible in homelessness policies (Burns et al., 2012; Grenier et al., 2016)

Disconnect between supportive housing models and the complex health and psycho-social needs (Burns, 2016)
Objectives

1) To understand how formerly homeless older adults’ sense of place is created once housed;

2) To understand how diverse identity markers (i.e., gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, and ethnicity) affects a person’s sense of place once housed; and

3) To identify the services and approaches that may promote housing stability and well-being to formerly homeless older adults.
Methodology

• Seven individuals aged 50+, across the homeless spectrum (Gaetz et al., 2016)
• Experts on their lived experience of older homelessness
• Willing to share their lives through stories, photography and film
Methods

• Interviews (multiple-individual and group) & Go-along interviews

• Go-along interviews
  • a type of mobile method commonly used in anthropological studies (Kusenbach, 2003)

• Visual methods (photographs and video, documentary film)

• Active engagement in knowledge dissemination activities
Beyond Housing: A digital short story to highlight the study and the gap in knowledge about the housing needs of older homeless adults.

https://youtu.be/2V4eMoe29rt
1. How does intersectionality contribute to hidden homelessness for this population?

2. What does it mean to you to be a co-researcher in this process?
Questions & Thank-you

For more information Please contact:
victoriaburns@ucalgary.ca


• Rowland, J., & Hamilton, J. (2016). *Changing the face of homelessness* Paper presented at the 7 Cities Conference on Housing First and Homelessness, Calgary, Alberta
