Serving Homeless Survivors

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Introduce yourselves
About ME

Name: Maddie Graves-Wilson
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Likes: Reading, outdoors, Riding quads, Harry Potter, Hanging out with family.

Why I chose this topic...

Experienced Homelessness
And have been serving
This need ever since

What do we know about folks that may be experiencing homelessness?
What did you come up with?

**Strengths**
- Innovative
- Resilient
- Raw
- Smart
- Cautious

**Challenges**
- Mental Health
- Addiction
- Lack of resources
- Self esteem/worth
- Lack of trust
Strengths Based Perspective

While maintaining realism is important

Here are the Stats

National Sexual Violence Resource Center
Lack of housing or inadequate shelter can increase the risk of sexual violence. 10% of women and 8% of men who experienced housing insecurity in the past year had a higher prevalence of intimate partner violence.

Victims of Physical or Sexual Violence...
58% of LGBTQ Youth experiencing homelessness

32% of Women experiencing homelessness
27% of Men experiencing homelessness

24% of youth experiencing homelessness witness sexual assaults
That's Heavy Stuff

And it’s made even more heavy knowing the majority of our clients experiencing homelessness possibly won’t be taken seriously when reporting or be able to access services they need.

First Things First
If you’re going to serve you need to know who you’re dealing with
Our Goal for our work with clients:

SUPPORT, EDUCATE, EMPOWER
In Your Community What Do Folks Look Like?

Who’s Your Survivor

Grab Your Handouts

Who’s Your Survivor?
Holly is a childhood survivor of incest. She is 30 years old. She has no connection to her father but her mother lives in the area and occasionally has her over for meals. She has been in and out of several abusive relationships. She held a job for four years after completing high school. She has been using heroin for the past 3 years to cope with the loss of her 2 children that were removed due to domestic violence by children’s services. Holly reports she has access to a car and a tent, but typically she participates in survival sex for shelter. You are meeting Holly for the 3rd time this time she’s arriving to her appointment soaking wet with no coat. She says she had a bad night and needs plan B contraception but doesn’t have insurance.
Think Needs, Barriers & Challenges, and Assets

What about your homeless survivor?

**Needs**
- Access to Birth control
- Support Person
- Clean/Warm Clothing

**Barriers and Challenges**
- Addiction
- No License
- No Medical Coverage
- Children in foster care

**Assets**
- Car
- Family
- Tent
- Work Experience
Don’t Assume We Know What’s Best

Finding tools for survivors to assess and evaluate their own situation and what needs to happen is empowering.

The Tool We Use

It's tangible and gets folks thinking.
Moving On...
The Resource Guide

Is it really helpful?

Who Does What?

1. What are the agencies in your area?
2. Who do they serve?
3. What services do they provide?
4. What criteria do you need to meet to be served?
Other Connections to Consider

• Who are the community officers?
  – Need a go to with each department and not just detectives

• Who runs the shelter?
  – When someone is released from the hospital at 2am where are they going?

• Who are the healthcare navigators?
  – Most of our clients have multiple healthcare needs so this is essential.

• Who are the Hospital Social Workers?
  - While their role is sometimes limited they can really help if you feel your client should not be released.

• Who are the Drug and Alcohol treatment intake staff
  - When you need a bed date these people are great to have relationships with these folks.

Grab Your Handouts

Who Does What?
How is your agency’s system currently set up?

Proactive or Reactive

Reactive System

- Crisis Calls
- Hospital Calls
- Walk Ins
- Approached at events when tabling at resource fairs
Proactive System

- Be where they are
  - MOUs with shelters
  - McKinney Vento liaison at schools
- Know who they know
  - Groups that work and serve this population regularly
- Get creative
  - Go set up at the park for the day

Beyond Survival

**Addiction Services**
- We provide advocacy at the treatment center and prevention classes

**MOUs**
- All law enforcement, mental health, shelters, and housing agencies.

**Transportation**
- We can provide transportation to SA related appointments.

**Awareness/Services**
- We get out of our office regularly. We partner with local libraries and other agencies to use private meeting rooms because we are so rural in our county and it is often difficult for folks to get to us.

**School Partners**
- We attend the counselors meeting at the beginning of each school year
Components of a Proactive System

What can you think of....
What might work in your community?

Grab Your Handouts

What are we doing?
And
How could we improve?
What are the Laws or Policies?

In your city...
In your county...
In your state...
Federal...
Common City Ordinances

- No sitting on sidewalks
- No panhandling
- Camping permitted on public grounds (Yes or No)
- How long can you leave your car parked in one spot

Common County

- Coordinated Entry Systems
- Subsidized housing policy
- Camping
- Housing Voucher Programs and emergency shelter programs
State

• Look for laws that aren’t necessarily specific to homelessness but that have impacts on those experiencing homelessness.

• Examples
  – Laws about open containers
  – Laws about prostitution
  – Runaway youth
  – Eligibility for state services
  – Rental laws
  – Education requirements

Federal

• Violence Against Women Act
  – Knowing what protections your client may be eligible for under this policy

• McKinney Vento
  – Understanding a little bit about what is required for schools

• Affordable Healthcare
  – Understanding your state system for healthcare

Can you think of any?
Don’t Be Afraid to Question

• Who is this helping?

• Who is this hurting?

• Why is this necessary?

• What are the alternatives?
In Closing...

• This is a basic overview of topics your agency seriously needs to take into account when developing proactive services for survivors experiencing homelessness. This is just to get you started and get you thinking.

NOW GET CREATIVE

Any Questions?

More information available up front
Thank YOU!

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