

8-1-2015

Counter-Narratives of Adults who are Homeless: Attachment and Resiliency in Context

Jeffrey David Roche

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digscholarship.unco.edu/dissertations>

Recommended Citation

Roche, Jeffrey David, "Counter-Narratives of Adults who are Homeless: Attachment and Resiliency in Context" (2015). *Dissertations*. 46.
<http://digscholarship.unco.edu/dissertations/46>

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. For more information, please contact Jane.Monson@unco.edu.

© 2015

JEFFREY DAVID ROCHE

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

COUNTER-NARRATIVES OF ADULTS WHO ARE
HOMELESS: ATTACHMENT AND RESILIENCY
IN CONTEXT

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Jeffrey David Roche

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education
Program of Counseling Psychology

August 2015

This Dissertation by: Jeffrey David Roche

Entitled: *Counter-Narratives of Adults who are Homeless: Attachment and Resiliency in Context*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in School of Applied Psychology and Counselor Education, Program of Counseling Psychology

Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

Basilia Softas-Nall, Ph.D., Research Advisor

Brian Johnson, Ph.D., Committee Member

Robyn S. Hess, Ph.D., Committee Member

Lory Clukey, Ph.D., Psy.D., R.N., C.N.S., Faculty Representative

Date of Dissertation Defense _____

Accepted by the Graduate School

Linda L. Black, Ed.D.
Associate Provost and Dean
Graduate School and International Admissions

ABSTRACT

Roche, Jeffrey D. *Counter-Narratives of Adults who are Homeless: Attachment and Resiliency in Context*. Published Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 2015.

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to illustrate the contextualized, multifaceted life stories of individuals who are homeless by exploring the reciprocal influence between (a) attachment, (b) and resiliency themes. In-depth narratives were gathered from 13 adults who were currently homeless and residing in one of two transitional homeless shelters in the Rocky Mountain region. While participant narratives as a whole are stand-alone results for revealing stereotype-challenging counter-narrative elements, cross-narrative analysis was conducted to explore commonalities of themes. Nine tentative themes emerged, including: Plurality of Pathways, It is Scary to Become Homeless, Adversity and Resilience Abound, Individualized Coping Strategies, Catch-22 of Individual-Level Protective Factors, Secure Versus Insecure: Which is More Adaptive, Importance of Positive Attachment Ties, Importance of Community Response, and Context: Tangible and Relational Resources. Results are used to discuss implications for possible inroads for homelessness prevention and intervention, highlight strengths and protective factors that can be drawn on clinically, and develop a more layered and contextualized understanding of pathways into and current experiences of homelessness. Keywords: attachment, context, counter-narratives, critical poverty theory, homeless, homelessness, narrative inquiry, qualitative study, resiliency

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I can only begin to express the gratitude, admiration, and love I have for my wife, Jennifer. She inspired me, supported me, and believed in me every step of the way. On what has been one of the most incredible and challenging journeys of my life, I know I could not have persevered as I have were it not for her hard work, patience, and sacrifice. This dissertation had been a labor of love and it is her loving tenacity that graces every page. I look forward to reprioritizing my new life goal and transitioning to this next phase of life together.

I would like to thank my parents, some of the strongest, most beautiful people I know. Sometimes when I have gotten so absorbed and lost on my own journey, it has been nice to take a step back to notice how I got there. So thank you, Mom and Dad, for your love, support, beaming pride, and gracious tears. I would not be the man, husband, son, or psychologist I am today had it not been for you.

I would also like to thank my siblings for their encouragement from afar, their rally cries, their levity, and their warmth. My path to becoming “DRJDR” has your footprints all over it from start to finish. This same gratitude and appreciation certainly extends to my broader family, my in-laws, my cohort family, and my family of friends. Thank you for being the needed “yardstick to reality” that has helped keep me grounded, humbled, and inspired.

Much like the participants in this dissertation, many members of my broader community have supported my journey and deserve recognition here. I am indebted to my colleagues at Illinois State for supporting me down the home stretch. Dr. Glenda Russell and the staff at CU-Boulder were important mentors and resources as I put my proposal together. I want to thank Dr. Kevin Powell as he was instrumental for shaping my perspectives on resilience. I too want to express my admiration for the staff members at Briarpatch who served as mentors, friends, and sources of inspiration with regard to their consummate professionalism, passion, and level of dedication to their work with underserved, at-risk, and homeless individuals.

I would like to thank to Dr. Maria Lahman for supporting my development as a qualitative researcher, my initial forays into this field, and for helping to shape this project from the start. To the rest of my committee, Dr. Brian Johnson, Dr. Robyn S. Hess, and Dr. Lory Clukey, thank you for your suggestions, diligent review, and help in keeping my project focused and more intentional. A special thank you is owed to my advisor, Dr. Lia Softas-Nall. Her ongoing encouragement, belief in my vision, furtherance of my passion for social justice, and provision of the necessary “love and kick” to get me to the finish line were invaluable. Her hard work, sincere investment in students, and passion for both teaching and research does not go unnoticed.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the shelters, the participants, and the many others who were willing to share their voices in support of this project. Your stories were both harrowing and inspirational, your courage was moving, and your desire to share of yourselves to help others was admirable. I was

humbled, privileged, and honored to have gotten to work with each and every one of you.

I can only hope that I have done your stories justice in the pages of this dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
Rationale	2
Statement of Purpose	7
Research Questions	10
Definition of Terms	11
Summary	14
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW	15
Overview	15
Homelessness	15
Attachment Theory	58
Homelessness and Attachment	77
Resiliency	83
Homelessness and Resiliency	90
Resiliency and Attachment	98
Homelessness, Attachment, and Resiliency	104
Context	107
Literature Summary and Conclusions	108
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY	111
Introduction	111
Research Model and Paradigm	112
Methodology	123
Research Participants	128
Setting	131
Research Methods	134
Procedures	142
Researcher's Stance	150
Trustworthiness	156
Ethical Considerations	162
Conclusion	166

CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS	168
Introduction.....	168
Within-Narrative Analysis	175
Cross-Narrative Analysis	378
Reflections on the Research Process.....	415
Trustworthiness.....	420
Conclusion	423
V. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION.....	426
Introduction.....	426
Purpose of the Study	428
Summary of Findings and Relationship with Current Literature.....	431
Implications.....	464
Assumptions and Limitations of the Study	481
Future Directions for Counseling Psychologists.....	482
Conclusion	483
REFERENCES	485
APPENDIX A. PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT SCRIPT	535
APPENDIX B. CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH.....	537
APPENDIX C. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS FORM	539
APPENDIX D. PILOT STUDY 1	541
APPENDIX E. PILOT STUDY 2.....	543
APPENDIX F. STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	545
APPENDIX G. PHOTO-ELICITATION INSTRUCTIONS AND QUESTIONS ...	548
APPENDIX H. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER.....	550
APPENDIX I. SITE PERMISSION FORM.....	552
APPENDIX J. MENTAL HEALTH REFERRALS	554
APPENDIX K. MANUSCRIPT FOR PUBLICATION.....	556

LIST OF TABLES

1.	Timeline for Data Collection	147
2.	Participants' Demographic Characteristics.....	169
3.	Factors Related and Contributing to Homelessness.....	172
4.	Participants' Adverse Childhood Experiences.....	173
5.	Participants' Relational Disruptions	174

LIST OF FIGURES

1.	Elements of research	113
2.	Kay photo 1	185
3.	Kay photo 2	186
4.	Kay photo 3	187
5.	Spencer photo 1	190
6.	Spencer photo 2	204
7.	Spencer photo 3	206
8.	Scooter photo 1	218
9.	Scooter photo 2	221
10.	Scooter photo 3	224
11.	DeBroncos photo 1	235
12.	DeBroncos photo 2	238
13.	Jade photo 1	250
14.	Jade photo 2	251
15.	Christina photo 1	262
16.	Christina photo 2	265
17.	Cancerman photo 1	271
18.	Cancerman photo 2	274
19.	Cancerman photo 3	277

20.	Black photo 1	286
21.	Black photo 2	290
22.	Black photo 3	295
23.	B.P. photo 1	306
24.	B.P. photo 2	311
25.	Blue photo 1	330
26.	James photo 1	335
27.	James photo 2	343
28.	James photo 3	345
29.	Vernon photo 1	360
30.	Vernon photo 2	364
31.	Vernon photo 3	366
32.	Snickers photo 1	377
33.	Snickers photo 2	377

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The United States is a country founded on the principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Growing up in a democratic, post-industrialized nation, one is often led to believe that as long as you try hard enough, any goal is within reach; effectively, picking oneself up by one's bootstraps is only an earnest push away. Thus, when one is unable to achieve his/her goals, it is either due to some flaw in his/her character or his/her lack of motivation. This line of thinking is consistent with those who are guilty of committing a fundamental attribution error (Myers, 2005). Admittedly, not everyone is guilty of committing this type of error to the same degree nor is the individual completely absolved from all responsibility for his/her current situation. Unfortunately, much like a pervasive stereotype, the legacy of this country's "bootstraps" mentality is widespread, resistant to change, and capable of affecting individuals and groups in a multitude of ways. Even though this dynamic might impact many individuals, those who are homeless might suffer the most from its effects (Hocking & Lawrence, 2000; Swick, 2005).

Psychologists have become increasingly aware of early life experiences and relationships thought to serve as major precursive risk factors for homelessness. According to the American Psychological Association (APA; 2009, p.1),

Homelessness exists when people lack safe, stable, and appropriate places to live. Sheltered and unsheltered people are homeless. People living doubled up or in overcrowded living situations or motels because of inadequate economic resources are included in this definition. (p. 1)

In 2009, the APA developed a task force designed to work toward ending homelessness, particularly of the chronic variety, with a particular focus on identifying and addressing psychological factors and conditions thought to underlie homelessness (APA, 2009; Cockersell, 2011) while striving to better define the role and improve the involvement of psychologists in ending the phenomenon.

To meet these goals, the APA (2009) provided recommendations for the areas of research, training, practice, as well as advocacy alongside individuals who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. Recommendations regarding research were of particular relevance for this study. Those recommendations included directing a specific focus on prevention efforts, discovering and disseminating evidence-based interventions, conducting program evaluations, exploring service use patterns among those with more chronic conditions at risk of becoming homeless, and finding ways to promote resiliency both in clinical practice and beyond (APA, 2009). Training recommendations centered around the need for exposure to working with this population, the development of specific multicultural competencies related to this population, continuing education opportunities, and community-based psychoeducational offerings (APA, 2009).

Meanwhile, practice recommendations included incorporating a strengths-based focus, providing services in accessible locations and times (Staab & Reimers, 2013), and collaborating with community partners both as a leader and source of support (APA, 2009). Lastly, APA's advocacy recommendations centered on legislation (i.e., health care coverage, supportive housing funds), funding (i.e., debt forgiveness for

psychologists who engage in related practice or research, tailored treatments and substance abuse services), service provision (i.e., education and job skills training, child care services), and generally tailored resource and service allocation.

Rationale

While prior research has been helpful for illuminating demographic shifts, risk factors for entering into or remaining homeless, and highlighting substance abuse and other mental health concerns, such efforts were often deficit-based and demonstrated a distinct failure when looking at strengths (APA, 2009); albeit, some exceptions did exist and are discussed in Chapter II. Clearly, the APA made a strong push in favor of studying strengths and resiliency among those who are homeless or at-risk of becoming so. Many become homeless for various reasons, yet not all become chronically or even episodically homeless. Although, as noted by the APA, much of the literature on homelessness focused on those who are chronically homeless rather than the majority of a population that only experiences briefer episodes (National Alliance to End Homelessness [NAEH], 2013). As a result, the APA has encouraged researchers to examine protective and resiliency factors, especially among those who are homeless and without substance abuse concerns, as a means of reducing the length and consequences of homelessness.

With more contemporary statistical modeling, Bonanno (2004) demonstrated that in a variety of circumstances, many individuals in the general population follow a healthy, adaptive, resilient pathway through their difficulties. Thus, it would make inherent sense that exploring resiliency factors would be a worthwhile endeavor for trying to mitigate the impact and shorten the length of homelessness. Yet one's ability to

respond resiliently might fade in the face of chronic trauma (G. Bonanno, personal communication, August 4, 2013), which was partially why Herman (1997) vehemently argued for the need to conceptualize trauma and adverse circumstances along a continuum of increased risk. Arguably, this points to the need for narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) as a vehicle for examining turning points that have positively or adversely impacted one's ability to respond resiliently. Boydell, Goering, and Morrell-Bellai (2000) found there should be intent in intervention to

focus on the strengths of marginalized people. The sense of hope and positive outlook regarding the future, expressed by many of the homeless individuals...suggest that early intervention to capture and use this motivation to escape homelessness would be useful. (p. 36)

This pointed to the need to capitalize on strengths early on in intervention.

Additionally, it might be useful to examine strengths and the process of responding resiliency within context and over time. As Teyber and McClure (2011) and Levenson (1995) among others pointed out, there is a possibility certain behaviors might have been formed during extreme or adverse circumstances and were adaptive at the time. Incidentally, the context of homelessness might also force a series of behaviors that appear maladaptive on the surface but are actually an initially resilient, adaptive, survival instinct (Barker, 2013; Baxter & Hopper, 1981). However, the rigid application of these behaviors across relationships and contexts might contribute to certain maladaptive, non-resilient behaviors (Levenson, 1995; Teyber & McClure, 2011).

As already indicated by the APA's (2009) list of future recommendations, a present gap in the literature was related to adopting intentionally strengths-based investigations with those who are homeless. Thus, it still remains unclear as to how some

individuals stagnate or worsen in their homelessness while others are able to rebound after an acute episode. In particular, there has been a limited focus on homelessness and the process of adult resiliency as many studies have focused on the resiliency process of children and adolescents (e.g., Neiman, 1988). Additionally, there has been a limited exploration of homelessness as it relates explicitly to attachment dynamics over time, although social support is often examined (APA, 2009).

As there are indications that both attachment and resiliency should be considered complementary theories (Atwool, 2006), it made sense to explore how one's attachment style, internal working models (IWMs), and attachment figures impact the ability to navigate the environment both personally and with professional contacts. Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) pointed to attachment theory as a lifespan theory that starts in childhood, is fairly stable, but can adapt in response to other relationships and contexts (Levenson, 1995; Siegel, 2001; Teyber & McClure, 2011). Yet only a limited number of studies have adopted a narrative/lifespan examination, let alone considerations of attachment and resiliency despite indications that this might be promising (Hauser, Golden, & Allen, 2006).

Bonanno (2004) observed that a shortcoming in the resiliency literature was researchers' exploration of resiliency as though it were an inherent, relatively fixed personality trait. Thus, there is a need to examine individuals' contexts (APA, 2009; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) for what serves as protective factors over time. But again, there has been a lack of studies that simultaneously examined individual, social, and contextual factors, let alone over time or across contexts. Indeed, the APA (2009) recommended that psychologists widen their micro-level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) lenses to also focus on

more structural/environmental-centered factors like one's experiences of poverty, perception of community, and perceived utility of the service system.

Thus, an apparent gap in the literature lies with considering the contextualized narratives of individuals who could be at various stages of homelessness (i.e., first time, episodic, or chronic) in order to better understand their experiences, their strengths and protective factors, and how attachment dynamics have played out as a precursor to and moderating factor for homelessness in both adaptive and maladaptive ways. This gap is important to fill in order to illuminate possible points of intervention prior to or in the midst of homelessness, provide a more empathic and holistic understanding of pathways to homelessness, and have a better sense of the interaction between perceived protective or risk factors, attachment relationships, and contexts over time.

Beyond this, an obvious rationale for this investigation centered on the recommendations set forth by the APA (2009) for how psychologists could aspire to help those who are homeless. Not only have I adopted an explicit strengths-based perspective within this investigation but I also combined this focus with many promising and contemporary theoretical understandings of homelessness. My consideration of how protective/risk factors, including attachment dynamics, emerged across the contextualized narratives of those who are homeless aligned nicely with trauma, ecological, and risk amplification models (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991; Toro, Trickett, Wall, & Salem, 1991; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999).

By and large, there is a need for the application of psychological constructs to homelessness (APA, 2009); until recently, the phenomenon of homelessness has been examined predominantly from anthropology, nursing, occupational therapy, medical,

psychiatric, and sociologists' perspectives with a limited counseling psychology focus. Essentially, there is a need for consultation, outreach, and therapy with these groups and relevant service agencies. For example, Cockersell (2011) found evidence that the incorporation of psychotherapy into standard service provision for those who are homeless led to dramatically improved outcomes. Kennedy, Lafa Agbényiga, Kasiborski, and Gladden (2010) found that interventions for those who were homeless often lacked theoretical and empirical grounding--a shortcoming they argued could be overcome by incorporating a risk and resiliency analysis over the life course.

Additionally, the APA ethics code (APA, 2002) called for a portion of psychologists' work to be given away, which begs the question of why there was not more psychologists volunteering at homeless shelters or engaging in substantial and meaningful work with this population. Presently, 59.4% of psychologists devote a few hours per year or less working with those who are homeless (APA, 2009). This result is especially disconcerting when one considers that "the psychologists who were more likely to work with people who are homeless might have been more likely to respond to this survey" (APA, 2009, p. 28). While many psychologists might devote their efforts and time to other underserved populations, the lack of sufficient involvement with the population of individuals who are homeless in particular warrants further attention.

Statement of Purpose

In light of the recent call to action put forth by the APA (2009), this investigation was designed in an effort to "address the cause, course, prevention, and remediation of homelessness" (p. 3). By focusing on factors that promoted resiliency including attachment dynamics over the lifespan and considering self-identified protective factors, I

illuminated possible avenues for early prevention and intervention. Through illustrating the multifaceted life stories and experiences of individuals who are homeless, this investigation highlighted the strength and humanity of the participants while dispelling misconceptions by having removed barriers to voice and allowed for authentic narratives to emerge.

The purpose of the investigation also aligned more broadly with the foundations of social justice and multicultural competence intrinsic to the field of counseling psychology. As agents of social justice, counseling psychologists engage in scholarship and professional action designed to change societal values, structures, policies, and practices, such that disadvantaged or marginalized groups gain increased access to the tools of self-determination (Goodman et al., 2004). Such social justice work can occur on three different levels: the micro level (i.e., individuals and families), the meso level (i.e., communities and organizations), and the macro level (i.e., social structures, ideologies, and policies). There is also a need to improve perceptions among providers within the counseling field itself (Ali & Lees, 2013; Staab & Reimers, 2013). On one occasion, a colleague referred to camping outdoors as “practicing being homeless.” I have also personally heard some colleagues use terms like “lazy bum,” “hobo,” and others that dehumanize individuals who are homeless or portray a narrow conceptualization of them. Such stereotypic and biased-laden statements might also be fueled by a tendency to overlook the intersectionality of poverty on one’s overall presentation, other identity markers, and wellbeing (Ali & Lees, 2013; Staab & Reimers, 2013). Personally, I found such perspectives offensive, unacceptable, and reaffirming of the need for this investigation.

Goodman et al. (2004) identified six recurring themes upon which social justice is founded including the need for ongoing self-examination and reflexivity (e.g., with power dynamics, biases, values, motivations), sharing power (e.g., consensual decision-making, co-constructing the research process, and actively collaborating), removing barriers to voice (e.g., gather narratives, gain native perspectives, and honor others' perspectives), facilitating consciousness raising (e.g., help individuals and communities recognize the role of historical and contemporary dominant narratives and structural forces; White & Epston, 1990), building on existing strengths, and leaving individuals and communities when they become self-sustaining (Ali & Lees, 2013). According to former APA President Melba Vasquez (2012), social justice broadly refers to notions of fairness and impartiality in one's behavior toward others so long as human suffering is decreased and equality and justice are promoted to all; in essence, social justice is a cornerstone of the counseling psychology profession.

In this investigation, my purpose was to gain a more encompassing look at the plight and successes across the contextualized lifespan of those who are homeless through attachment and resiliency-based lenses. This exploration furthered attachment, resiliency, and homelessness knowledge bases as well as brought new insights into the work of counseling psychologists, outreach workers, and for relevant stakeholders. As Friedman and Levine-Holdowsky (1997) pointed out, the only guaranteed commonality among individuals who are homeless is they do not have a home. Thus, by adopting a critical standpoint with participants through co-constructing the research process and collaboratively representing their narratives, I hoped I removed some barriers to voice

and allowed for stereotype-challenging counter-narratives of action, resistance, and strength to emerge (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010).

Ultimately, my hope was for counseling psychologists, other mental health professionals, and outreach workers to read this research and say that a careful systemic examination and discussion of protective/risk factors and attachment-relevant material across the lifespan might prove useful in my work with clients who are either homeless or at-risk for homelessness. Also, an attachment perspective might help me better understand my client's worldview while an exploration of resiliency processes might cast my client in a more agentic/capable, humanistic light with internal and external strengths that could be utilized therapeutically. Lastly, it was important to consider the reciprocal influence between the individual and his/her immediate and broader contexts. This might be useful in determining what barriers there might be to accessing resources (if present to begin with), understanding and counteracting potentially oppressive forces in the environment, as well as developing a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which certain behaviors have been both adaptive and maladaptive depending on the context. As noted by the APA (2009), "By also understanding protective factors, including social support that fosters resilience among adults, adolescents, and families who are homeless, psychologists can develop targeted prevention and intervention models" (p. 2).

Research Questions

Through this inquiry, I explored how themes of attachment and resiliency interwove the narratives of adults who were currently homeless (e.g., which relationships, contexts, factors, etc. promoted or inhibited more resilient responding and how this evolved over time). As such, I investigated the ways in which homeless adults'

attachment and resiliency-based contextualized narratives shed light on their pathway into, adaptation to, and current outlook regarding their present state of homelessness. More specifically, I investigated the degree and manner in which the cumulative, subjective impact that one's childhood and adult attachment history, individual and systemic risk/protective factors history, and perceived relationship to their community had on the outlook of adults who were currently experiencing some level of homelessness. Through this investigation, I sought to explore the following primary research questions:

Q1 How does the reciprocal influence between perceived context and the individual play out across the lifespan in light of possible

Q1a Attachment

Q1b Resiliency themes?

Definition of Terms

Attachment style. A relatively stable, marked characterological pattern of interpersonal relatedness thought to be influenced by the level of warmth and responsiveness one experienced from infancy onward with primary caregivers (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980). Attachment styles are demarcated on the basis of falling on a continuum of interpersonal anxiety and interpersonal avoidance that is influenced by one's internal working models (IWMs). Four categories of attachment style were examined: secure attachment as marked by positive internal models of both self and others, preoccupied attachment as marked by negative internal models of self and positive internal models of others, dismissive attachment as marked by a positive internal model of self and a negative internal model of others, and a fearful attachment style as

marked by negative internal models of both self and others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Context. The aesthetic, cultural, environmental, relational, functional, infrastructural, and perceptual manner in which individuals define their community, with particular attention paid toward elements perceived as helpful, safe, and facilitative versus those that are antagonistic, unsafe, and detrimental.

Counter-narratives. Narratives that try to challenge hegemonic, reductionist, stereotypical, prejudicial, and blame-laden images of an individual or group by keeping real, nuanced, contextualized individuals with inherent strengths and susceptibilities, structural realities, agentic potential, and diverse voices in the fore (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010).

Homeless/homelessness/unhoused. “Homelessness exists when people lack safe, stable, and appropriate places to live. Sheltered and unsheltered people are homeless. People living doubled up or in overcrowded living situations or motels because of inadequate economic resources are included in this definition” (APA, 2009, p. 1). Throughout this study, I used the terms homeless and homelessness to remain consistent, used terminology most commonly utilized within the research literature, and allowed for the dissemination of this research to be more accessible. However, I acknowledge that the idea of home was often wrapped up in myriad emotional connotations and memories (Moore, 2007; Rivlin, 1990) and that some proponents argued for the use of alternative terms such as unhoused. I also attempted to use first person language consistently to avoid further perpetuating stigmatizing and marginalizing

language while recognizing mistakes are likely and reflect my own fallibility and room for growth (APA, 2009; Finley & Diversi, 2010; Lahman et al., 2013).

Internal working models. Subconscious mental schemas thought to not only influence whether or not someone views him/herself as worthy of love and attention but also whether or not they expect a reciprocal relationship in their interactions with others and if others are to be trusted or considered safe (Bowlby, 1969).

Photo-elicitation. Photo-elicitation (Ortega-Alcázar & Dyck, 2012) is a qualitative method of data collection whereby participants use cameras to generate and later reflect on images in a follow-up interview. Participants have the opportunity to reflect on the thoughts, feelings, or memories connected to the pictures they take.

Protective factors. Relationships, circumstances, items, characteristics, or qualities at individual, familial, and communal levels that help mitigate distress either through prevention or assistance during a time of need (Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005).

Resilience/resiliency. A process of responding adaptively to adverse circumstances, often by drawing from individual, familial, and communal protective factors. Resiliency does not reflect static traits or characteristics but encompasses the manner in which one is able to bounce back from setbacks, which might or might not involve a return to baseline functioning (Bonanno, 2004).

Risk factors. Relationships, circumstances, items, characteristics, or qualities at individual, familial, and communal levels that place one in greater distress or lead to worsened/maladaptive coping (Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005).

Vulnerability. From a research ethics standpoint, vulnerability refers to certain individuals or groups who are in need of protection from exploitation or maltreatment during the research process due to their lack of power, historical exploitation, or socially disadvantaged position (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007).

Summary

In this opening chapter, I provided a backdrop for this investigation that explored the thematic confluence of attachment and resiliency-based factors across contextualized narratives of adults who were presently homeless. As was suggested by the APA (2009), there has been a lack of research focused on these areas whereas there is a preponderance of existing research casting those who are homeless in a deficits-based light. By focusing on the recent series of recommendations for psychologists set forth by the APA (2009) to help people who are homeless, I elaborated on how I chose to pursue a particular niche based on those recommendations.

By adopting a critical stance to my work, I engaged participants in the process of co-construction to see how themes of attachment, resiliency, and context interacted across the lifespan. An inherent focus on strengths, active resistance, and a combined micro/macro, individual/structural focus afforded participants the space to voice possible counter-narratives (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). The resulting counter-narratives challenged stereotypes, allowed for more nuanced and empathic layers of understanding, and helped point the way for means of prevention and early intervention.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed review of the literature surrounding primary constructs of interest in this investigation including homelessness, attachment, resiliency, and overlaps among them all. Beginning with a focus on poverty as well as past and contemporary thinking surrounding the phenomenon of and common pathways into homelessness, I move into a discussion surrounding adverse outcomes stemming from the experience of homelessness. Stereotyped depictions and negative public perceptions are considered before reviewing common threads among existing approaches to treatment and community reintegration.

Homelessness

According to the definition from the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, homelessness is defined as follows:

[N]amely an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, or an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is: (a) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); (b) a public or private place that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or (c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations for human beings. (USC 42 §11302)

Based on this definition, the estimated number of individuals in the United States who are homeless on any given evening is 633,782 (NAEH, 2013) with 1.6 million individuals making use of transitional housing programs or overnight shelters annually (Lee, Tyler, & Wright, 2010). Within those numbers, roughly 38% are people in families, 62% are individuals, approximately 13% are veterans, and 16% are individuals considered chronically homeless (i.e., multiply episodic or sustained periods of homelessness, often coinciding with a mental health condition or physical disability; NAEH, 2013).

These numbers were gathered using a point-in-time counting approach and collected from communities every other January, providing a snapshot of homelessness at a given time. These data were used to allocate funding to communities from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2010). Such numbers often failed to accurately capture the true composition of the homeless population because, in part, there were intermittent periods when individuals who did not need to seek shelter were not assessed (National Coalition for the Homeless [NCH], 2009; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2010). Further, this data collection tended to miss the so-called hidden homeless or those who were not represented in shelters due to residing in not easily identified or accessible areas (e.g., couch surfing, doubling up, camp grounds, automobiles, makeshift housing, and caves; Finley & Diversi, 2010). The varying and shifting faces of homelessness as well as the inherent difficulty with definitional accuracy further complicated this process.

There has been a great deal of difficulty with providing clear-cut definitions of homelessness, let alone delineating where, how, and with which subset of the homeless population one conducts research (Edidin, Ganim, Hunter, & Karnik, 2011; Lahman et

al., 2013). In many ways, it might be best that a fixed definition of homelessness is lacking because of the multitude of ways in which one can arrive at, experience, and remain homeless. After all, for many, homelessness is a temporary, nonpermanent state (NCH, 2009). As Friedman and Levine-Holdowsky (1997) pointed out, the only guaranteed commonality among people who are homeless is they do not have a home. Another broader commonality might be related to poverty in the form of “lack of education, lack of work skill, physical or mental disability, substance abuse problem, minority status, sole support parent status, or the absence of an economically viable support system” (Morrell-Bellai, Goering, & Boydell, 2000, p. 582). Regardless, while statistical and definitional accuracy can better inform the public and funders about the magnitude of the problem, such nomothetic representations often fail to capture the necessary idiographic narrative that can differentiate those who experience homelessness acutely from those who ultimately come to experience more chronic homelessness.

Once homeless, people usually fit into one of three categories as defined by Nooe and Patterson (2010): first time, episodic (i.e., experiencing acute, situational episodes), and chronic (i.e., long term, often defined as a disabling condition). While these categories capture the important longevity distinctions between short-term, periodic, and long-term experiences of homelessness, they fail to capture important aspects of context and severity. Belcher, Scholler, and Drummond (1991) proposed categories for varying levels of homelessness severity based on where one resided while lacking permanent, stable housing including: level I (e.g., living with friends and family, couch surfing, and doubling up), level II (e.g., living in overnight or transitional shelters), and level III (e.g., living on the streets or other similarly exposed environments). Within this investigation,

I focused predominantly on individuals who fell under the first time or episodic categories because such individuals comprised the largest subset of individuals who were homeless, especially within shelter/level II settings (Morrell-Bellai et al., 2000). Further, this population was a more accessible target because they were stable enough to engage with over the course of the inquiry yet were been shown to have differing situational and experiential narratives (Tsai, Edens, & Rosenheck, 2011). These individuals might also be more likely to be immersed in a critical transition point wherein factors related to the constructs of resiliency and attachment were most relevant (Goering, Tolomiczenko, Sheldon, Boydell, & Wasylenki, 2002). As Goering et al. (2002) observed, with the exception of certain childhood indicators like out-of-home placement and youth homelessness, the backgrounds of first time versus episodically homeless individuals were largely the same. Next, I turn more broadly to the influence of poverty in light of its pervasive impact on and relevance for those who experience homelessness.

Impact of Poverty

Homelessness has been linked to many developmental, physical, and mental health problems (e.g., educational failure, adjustment difficulties, depression, schizophrenia, alcohol and drug issues, and anxiety; DeForge, Belcher, O'Rourke, & Lindsey, 2008). From a structural standpoint, instability of living arrangements can create experiences of marginalization, which can in turn contribute to the subtle dehumanization of individuals (DeForge et al., 2008). One of the most common denominators of residential instability is poverty. According to Yoshikawa, Aber, and Beardslee (2012), over 20% of minors are officially poor and another 20% are nearly

poor. Approximately one quarter of adults aged 18-61 earn less than \$7.73 an hour and often lack sick days or paid time off to meet their needs (Lott, 2012). In general, it is expensive to be poor, both in a literal sense as well as in terms of safety, health, and psychological costs; those who are impoverished often find themselves displaced and victims of urban renewal (Lott, 2012).

Although we tend to refer to poverty as an overarching construct, poverty can be experienced in different ways (Yoshikawa et al., 2012) including absolute poverty (i.e., unable to meet most basic needs), relative poverty (i.e., falling below 50% of the national median income), subjective poverty (i.e., perception of barely getting by), and asset poverty (i.e., wealth-accumulated debt). This point is important as not all of those who are homeless experienced poverty prior to their current state of being homeless. Underemployment or job loss might have led to the inability to afford basic needs and thereby a subsequent decline in psychological resources and parenting quality (Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Regardless, poverty is known to have adverse outcomes on an individual's mental, emotional, and behavioral health, although the magnitude of the effect is uncertain (APA, 2009).

The negative effects of poverty are thought to be cumulative and developmental (Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Poverty at one developmental stage can impact the next and lead to an increasingly negative effect on one's stress-immune response system over time (Edidin et al., 2011; Perry & Szalavitz, 2006). According to Yoshikawa et al. (2012), poverty has many individual, relational, and institutional co-factors including family structure and relational processes (e.g., patterns of enmeshment), parenting quality (e.g., levels of parenting responsiveness, cognitive stimulation, and attachment processes),

parent psychological factors (e.g., teaching coping skills to reduce anxiety and depression, or other socio-emotional interventions), genetic factors (e.g., temperament, trait anxiety levels), social factors (e.g., support, positive attachment figures), and social nets (i.e., social aid). As such, some have argued that poverty and homelessness need to be challenged through the notion of equity. Patterson, Markey, and Somers (2012) observed that levels of equity are influenced by “employment security, working conditions, equitable income distribution, food security, early childhood development, education, healthcare services, adequate housing, social safety nets, and social inclusion” (p. 133).

Early experiences with poverty and homelessness do not preclude but certainly place one at risk for exposure to domestic and other forms of violence, caregiver separations and other forms of loss, poor attachment ties, malnourishment and other health related concerns, and a whole host of other adverse childhood experiences (APA, 2009; Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980), all of which could detrimentally impact one’s future development and life course. The number of adolescent homeless, runaway, and throwaways has continued to climb, which places them at increased risk for exposure to domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation, alcohol and drug abuse, sexually transmitted infections, and a slew of mental and physical health-related challenges (Hocking & Lawrence, 2000; Kidd, 2007; Taylor-Seehafer et al., 2007). The potentially ill effects of poverty and homelessness do not stop in adolescence. Indeed, these early adverse experiences and chronic traumas might lead to certain developmental halts, such as those related to emotional regulation, that carry over into adulthood (APA, 2009; Herman, 1997; Perry & Szalavitz, 2006).

As poverty and related correlates such as level of educational attainment and job prestige are associated with social class, the social psychology of both class and classism is also relevant to consider (Lott, 2012; Smith & Redington, 2010). Social class reliably predicts the degree to which one can obtain and benefit from a society's economic and political resources, is correlated with a wide array of life experiences, and mediates and influences what a person is likely to learn, believe, anticipate, and aspire toward (Lott, 2012). A self-reinforcing system of social inequality can be generated by social class differences through low expectations in school performance that derive from classroom inequalities and differential awareness of school opportunities (Lott, 2012). Perhaps most detrimental is the functional and psychological impact of class-based prejudices. Institutional classism involves the maintenance and reinforcement of low status by social institutions that present barriers to those who live in poverty, thereby increasing the difficulty of accessing needed resources (Lott, 2012). Meanwhile, interpersonal classism emerges in the form of prejudice, negative stereotypes, and interpersonal discrimination (e.g., avoidance, reactions of disgust) that can have painful effects (APA, 2009; Lott, 2012; Smith & Mao, 2012; Smith & Redington, 2010).

Background and Context

Deinstitutionalization of those with mental illness and Vietnam-era veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse brought the issue homelessness sharply into focus during the latter half of the 20th century (Main, 1998). The individual attribution focus has also come about due to the realization that the true impact of structural attributions has been overestimated; in truth, a blended explanatory model is necessary for understanding both the catalyzing and perpetuating factors of homelessness

(Lee et al., 2010; Main, 1998). To appreciate the structural and individual attributions and their impact on the lived experience of individuals who are homeless, one must examine the historical context leading up to and following deinstitutionalization and other movements in the United States.

After World War II, legislative action and humanitarian reform efforts began to put the deinstitutionalization movement into motion. For starters, the 1950 Social Security Act amendments excluded the large, state-run institutions from funding for treating older adults (Geller, 2000). When the amendments to the Social Security Act came out in 1965, states became eligible to receive federal funding for the first time by treating older adults through Medicaid. In addition to funding incentives for removing patients from state institutions, concern for the welfare of individual patients continued to gain momentum. Due to these concerns, the Joint Commission on Mental Health and Illness was put together in 1955 to recommend community-based alternatives to large, state-run institutions (Lamb, 1984). A further caveat of this humanitarian concern was that deinstitutionalization would help break down the current institutional isolation and foster community integration; this concern was at the forefront of the Mental Retardation and Community Mental Health Centers Construction Act of 1963 (Talbot, 1992). Community-based treatment was the overwhelming zeitgeist despite evidence to the contrary (Geller, 2000). The deinstitutionalization movement seemed to gain even more momentum as antipsychotic agents such as chlorpromazine helped to stabilize some of the more severe mentally ill patients staying at the institutions (Talbot, 1992). In light of this progress, community advocates gathered together to rally against involuntary inpatient treatment. These efforts led to the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act of 1968, making

involuntary inpatient treatment limited to patients who represented a clear threat to themselves or others (Lamb, 1984).

Despite the espoused humanitarian goals of improving services and re-granting individuals their liberty, feelings of mastery, and improved self-esteem, deinstitutionalization was not really an intended consequence. Some scholars argued that it was really the happenstance of various policies aimed to keep control and responsibility in the hands of individual states amidst their attempts to obtain federal dollars (Geller, 2000). As successive administrations took power throughout the 1980s and 1990s, several bills (e.g., 1988 Medicare Catastrophic Act, 1990 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997) came across the floor of Congress in an effort to maintain this balance between states' responsibilities and the overreliance on federal funding with the spirit of the community-based deinstitutionalization movement (Geller, 2000). One of the ultimately more patient-decentered acts came from the Reagan administration's decision to have all federal funding provided to states in the form of block grants (Talbot, 1992) wherein states could divide received federal funding in a categorical as opposed to a needs-based basis. This resulted in underfunding and denying the needs of those with mental illnesses. Although slow to recognize this disparity, there were several failed efforts throughout the 1990s that attempted to gain parity between medical and mental health treatment (Geller, 2000); only recently has this need been resolved though we have yet to see the true impact of the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. Only within the past two to three decades have those in power come to recognize several unintended consequences that came with the deinstitutionalization movement. Several scholars have

argued that deinstitutionalization itself is not the problem but how it was executed (Belcher, 1991; Geller, 2000; Talbott, 1992).

Many private facilities such as board-and-care homes and homeless shelters jumped at the opportunity to fill the treatment needs left by the emptying of state hospitals (Lamb, 1984). Much like their institutional predecessors, concern for quality and humanitarian goals was not necessarily there. Ideally, to align with the humanitarian underpinnings of the movement, “services should include social and vocational rehabilitation, recreational activities, and mental health treatment” (Lamb, 1984, p. 903). Unfortunately, such aspirational goals were rarely lived up to; instead one found blanket treatment statements, poorly thought out follow-up care and transitional housing plans, client “hot potato” in the wake of funding fluctuations, inadequate staff-client ratios, lack of structured living arrangements, and inadequate psychiatric treatment often provided by non-psychiatric physicians (Talbott, 1992, p. 622). Such fluctuation was partially due to many states being reluctant in allocating funds for community-based services. Additionally, providers at board-and-care homes were provided with a fixed monthly reimbursement regardless of the level of presenting severity for providing services to the mentally ill that was significantly lower than that provided for the care of developmentally disabled individuals. Such findings led Lamb (1984) to suggest there was a “concern that the shelters are becoming mini-institutions for the chronically mentally ill, an ironic alternative to the state mental hospitals,” (p. 903). At different points in times, similar findings emerged in other nations that made the deinstitutionalization push, e.g., Great Britain (Craig, 1992) and Northern Ireland (Coleman & Wilson, 1991).

In Talbott's (1992) opinion, the switch from placement settings did not really deinstitutionalize care. Rather, it led to recidivism and "trans-institutionalization," or the institutional circuit, as people bounced around with increased contact with correctional facilities, mental hospitals, and homelessness (APA, 2009; Belcher, 1988a). In the wake of the deinstitutionalization movement, some scholars referred to the criminalization of homelessness (Kinsler & Saxman, 2007); Los Angeles County Jail was considered the nation's largest mental health facility (Geller, 2000). Concerned with such patterns, the American Psychiatric Association created a task force in 1983 for those who were both homeless and mentally ill (Lamb, 1984). Some of the findings that emerged indicated those who were both homeless and mentally ill had difficulty abiding by shelter rules and policies and struggled with medication compliance when in outpatient settings (Belcher, 1988a). More recently, the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (2003) was enacted to break into the institutional circuit cycles; however to date, interventions and policies designed to disrupt it are lacking.

Swick (2005) noted that many who are in shelter end up in monotonous, repetitious daily cycles that do not lead to advancement or new opportunities for societal reintegration. In turn, this could lead to a sense of fatalism, isolation, and a decrease in motivation. Due to some of these concerns, many of these individuals have not been able to follow through on mental health aftercare plans. In a repeated measures aftercare assessment, Zammichieli (1997) found that diagnosis was not as defining as level of income and community support, although diagnosis did affect future deterioration. This is why Lamb (1984) and others pointed to the need for more "aggressive case management," (p. 906) and the possible benefits of longer-term care. Indeed, many of

these scholars were not arguing for reinstitutionalization but were arguing for more individualized assessment.

Shifts in demographics. This review of relevant history surrounding the deinstitutionalization movement in the United States was designed to properly contextualize some of the public and academic thought surrounding individual and structural precursors to homelessness. As Belcher (1987) and others since have observed (NCH, 2009), the majority of individuals who are homeless do not struggle with severe forms of mental illness while others do not develop major mental health concerns until after they have already become homeless. Indeed, those who support the view that the deinstitutionalization movement is the primary cause of homelessness perpetuate stereotypes that equate homelessness to mental illness. Yet it is important to recognize those who are homeless and have various forms of mental illness and other disabilities, particularly the chronically homeless, have been impacted by the decrease and diffusion of services (Morrell-Bellai et al., 2000).

Viewing homelessness solely through a deinstitutionalization-based lens also neglects the shifting demographics of homelessness that have taken place largely over the past three decades. Lee et al. (2010) reflected on the shifting demographics of homelessness “spanning the tramp (1890s-1920s), Great Depression (1930s), and skid row (1940s-1970s) eras (p. 502),” finding there has been an increase in the percentages of homeless women and families, unaccompanied youth, and an overrepresentation of Blacks and other minorities. Meanwhile, single men still comprise the bulk of the homeless population and often lack access to benefit programs that predominantly serve the needs of family (Lee et al., 2010).

Rossi (1990) noted that many researchers and politicians anticipated the virtual disappearance of homelessness leading up until the 1980s as the demographics among those who were homeless were predominantly marked by older men living in skid rows. Yet the increase in poverty in the 1980s (i.e., 75% cut in federal housing programs for those in need, relatively less income amidst inflated costs, and less holding steady forms of employment) brought about an increase in overall numbers. There was a shifting demographic defined by increasing numbers of younger, minority, women, and families living and sleeping in worsened conditions (Foscarinis, 1991; Rossi, 1990).

Arangua, Andersen, and Gelberg (2005) also brought attention to the proportional increase of homeless women and families, which has shifted from an estimated 3% of the population of those who were homeless in 1964 to 32% in 2006; this demographic shift has been referred to as the feminization of homelessness. More recently, attention has been paid to the underpinnings of family homelessness as current estimates have families representing roughly one-third of the homeless population (Harter, Berquist, Titsworth, Novak, & Brokaw, 2005; Styron, Janoff-Bulman, & Davidson, 2000). This number might be underestimated due to the high incidence of hidden homeless families, not to mention the difficulty of accounting for those who experience short-term, transient periods of homelessness (Harter et al., 2005). The majority of those homeless families consist of a single mother and her children (Styron et al., 2000). As another added complication, many survivors of domestic violence, who might or might not have to deal with PTSD, wind up becoming homeless after escaping their abusive situation (Bufkin & Bray, 1998). Unfortunately, the potential to encounter physical and sexual abuse might be amplified by having to survive and provide for one's children on the streets.

Following the 1980s, the United States moved into a period of relative economic prosperity that lasted from 1992-2002. Israel, Toro, and Ouellette (2010) tracked demographics at the start and end of this time period in a major U.S. metropolitan area, finding that economic well-being brought about a proportionally demographic return toward older male, chronically homeless individuals with more severe mental and physical health challenges as well as restricted social connections. They also observed that economic growth might only bring about curvilinear shifts in homelessness as employers might be slow to hire those among the homeless population who have lower work skill levels (Israel et al., 2010). More recently, the economic recession has brought about an (estimated) increase in the numbers of those who are homeless since 2007 (NAEH, 2013).

Based on shifting numbers, demographics, and levels of homelessness chronicity, there appears to be a correspondence with shifts in economics. Recessions have brought about increases in first time and episodically periods of homelessness, especially among minority groups, women, and families. Meanwhile, periods of economic prosperity have seen slight overall decreases in numbers with proportional shifts toward the chronically homeless (Israel et al., 2010; NAEH, 2013; Rossi, 1990). Beyond humanitarian concerns over those who are homeless, there is also an economic cost to the unimproved prevalence of homelessness as it places a burden on publicly funded mental health systems. After all, homelessness has been associated with a 115% increase in the odds of having had three or more acute care episodes over the course of a year or lifetime (Lindamer et al., 2012).

Organizational action. Although a resolution to homelessness has yet to be seen, this does not mean the government or organizations, such as the APA, have been standing idle. Through the 1980s, rhetoric surrounding concern over homelessness in the United States continued to swell. Yet up until then, little action had been taken. Long-time advocate for those who were homeless, Foscarinis (1991) saw the need to address both emergency needs and long-term solutions; thus, homelessness advocates have held housing, income, and civil rights as foundational principles. Such calls have led organizations such as the NCH (2013) to put forth Homeless Person's Bill of Rights legislation that argues for protections around marginalization and criminalization of homelessness, rights to privacy, citizenship rights (i.e., voting), and fair access to a variety of social and legal services. Emergency measures are necessary but ultimately ineffective for redressing the social injustice of homelessness (Foscarinis, 1991).

The APA Council of Representatives (1991) adopted a series of resolutions to encourage action in response to the recognition that homelessness poses a serious social injustice. This recognition was related to how (a) inadequate and unstable housing adversely impacts one's growth, health, and rights; (b) homelessness disproportionately impacts various minority groups; (c) the feminization of homelessness continues to increase; (d) there is a reciprocal influence between emotional duress, mental illness, substance use, and homelessness; and (e) psychologists possess various skillsets that could help ameliorate the problem (APA Council of Representatives, 1991). These resolutions included a call for research to obtain accurate information on the magnitude and nature of homelessness with particular attention to its disproportionate impact. The resolutions also advocated for immediate action to rehouse those who are homeless, to

devote public funds toward both emergency and preventative measures, to disseminate information widely for influencing policy and perception, and to promote the adoption of a conference on homelessness within the government (APA Council of Representatives, 1991).

Due to widespread efforts to address ending homelessness from organizations such as the American Psychological Association (APA, 2009; APA Council of Representatives 1991) and the NAEH (2013) plan to eliminate chronic homelessness within 10 years, the numbers of chronically homeless individuals have decreased over the past decade. The 10-year plan, issued for community-level adoption in 2000, had an explicit focus on collecting demographics, funding poverty-based programs, fostering housing first options, and building infrastructure to support adequate housing, incomes, and sustained services (NAEH, 2013). Recently, the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2010) developed a goal of ending chronic homelessness (i.e., continuously homeless for one year or more, or four episodes of homelessness over a three year span) within five years. By and large, this matter has become a focal point within the U.S. homelessness policy due to the high costs associated with service provision to this segment of the homeless population in particular (Lindamer et al., 2012; U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2010).

In recent years, “the housing crisis and deep economic downturn has generated a marked surge in homelessness and residential instability that lingers along with the Great Recession” (Masten, 2012, p. 363). Despite the call for change by both the U.S. government and APA, this increase in numbers suggests that something is clearly not working. A closer examination of demographic data suggests that the proportion of those

who are chronically homeless is approximately 16%, down 19.3% of the total numbers since 2007 (NAEH, 2013). Thus, if the numbers are increasing overall despite the proportional and overall decrease in the numbers of those who are chronically homeless, this adds further credence to the findings of Israel et al. (2010) around shifting demographics of homelessness.

According to Main (1998), the causes of homelessness have been explained historically by either the structural or the individual model. Examples of structural causes include unemployment rates and the effects of one's socioeconomic grouping, the housing market and the effects of housing discrimination and segregation, as well as a multitude of legislative acts that impact various aspects of the homelessness cycle (Morrell-Bellai et al., 2000). Legislation such as the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 has certainly brought about some positive reforms for allowing great accessibility to various forms of shelters and funding for outreach programs. Welfare reforms such as Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) food stamps and healthcare reform have been vital for many families who would have otherwise been pushed to the brink and ended up living on the streets or in shelters (Israel et al., 2010). Churches and other community agencies have also provided vital resources to those in need. While well intended and a positive step, these reforms are insufficient when facing budget cuts across the board.

On the other hand, some types of legislation and policy changes are laden with bias that not so subtly discriminates against disenfranchised groups such as individuals and families who are homeless (Fitzpatrick & Myrstol, 2011; Harter et al., 2005). Scholars have argued that some legislation has resulted in making those who are

homeless less visible; not only that, it also makes outreach efforts increasingly more difficult (Belcher, 1988a, 1988b; Harter et al., 2005; Kryda & Compton, 2009). Harter et al. (2005) argued it is precisely these types of legislative acts, in addition to the pervasive “not in my backyard” (p. 305) types of communal rhetoric, that contribute to the issue of the hidden homeless (Finley & Diversi, 2010). When examined from a cognitive dissonance theory lens (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959), it makes sense that many cities, despite espousing humanistic and progressive ideals, would enact policies that allow for them to pretend there is no homeless population. Returning to the individual versus structural explanations for homelessness, structural models look for environmental causes of homelessness whereas individual models place the onus of responsibility on the individual who is homeless. Such models point to individual circumstances, traits, and characteristics that can increase one’s risk for becoming or remaining homeless (Fitzpatrick, 2005; Kim & Ford, 2006; Pleace, 1998).

Pathways to Homelessness

Many of the conceptual thoughts on causes of homelessness recognize the contributory role of both individual and structural factors (APA, 2009; Kim & Ford, 2006; Main, 1998). More recently, the focus has turned toward longitudinal correlates and qualitative undertakings designed to understand individuals’ unique pathways into, out of, and cycling through homelessness. According to Finfgeld-Connett (2010), the process of becoming homeless involves gradual downward spirals that often stem from early life factors, events, and relationships. Kim and Ford (2006) stated, “Homelessness appears to involve a vicious cycle (pathway) in which socioeconomic and biopsychosocial adversities are compounded by the experience of homelessness, leading

in turn to psychological disaffiliation, hopelessness, and loss of self-efficacy” (p. 6).

Thus, it would appear that the relative contribution of individual and structural factors can be muddled and unclear, and less clearly understood through nomothetic examination (Sosin, 2003). Sosin (2003) argued that key events or turning points often occur separately but interact with individual correlates of homelessness.

A major criticism for much of the pathways literature was an over-devotion to individual factors influencing homelessness to the neglect of more macro level, structural factors, or the interplay between the two (Morrell-Bellai et al., 2000). In exploring pathways into homelessness (Clapham, 2003), Morrell-Bellai et al. (2000) found that macro level factors (i.e., poverty, poor employment opportunities, inadequacy of welfare and affordable housing) combined with other risk factors (i.e., adverse childhood experiences, substance use and mental health concerns, and social disconnection). All factors influenced pathways into homelessness with more severe trauma and present substance use sustaining chronic homelessness. This was consistent with the growing consensus within the field. Individual factors were typically deficit-based in focus (i.e., mental illness and substance abuse factors) and tended to struggle with parceling out if homelessness or such individual factors came first (Morrell-Bellai et al., 2000).

Exploring the relationship between pathways into homelessness and the subsequent outcomes related to duration of time spent homeless has recently become an important area of focus (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2013). Chamberlain and Johnson (2013) found that housing crises and family breakdowns were often marked by shorter durations of homelessness and less engagement with more entrenched adaptations to a homeless way of life. Whereas substance use, mental health concerns, and transitioning

from homelessness from one's youth into adulthood were marked by longer periods of homelessness and more complex needs for exiting homelessness. This way of life often refers to having a sense of belonging within the community of homeless, a feeling lacking elsewhere (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2013). The youth to adult pathway compromised the largest proportion of their sample (35%)--nearly double that of the next closest stemming from housing crises (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2013). These findings aligned with other reported findings on the composition of the homeless population (NAEH, 2013).

While they identified a number of primary pathways, Chamberlain and Johnson (2013) acknowledged that a more in-depth, nuanced exploration would be appropriate while using the primary pathways as initial frames of reference. As Edidin et al. (2011) and McKenzie-Mohr, Coates, and McLeod (2011) observed, there is often a reciprocal relationship between early experiences of homelessness, trauma, and the effects of increased marginalization. This points further toward the potential benefits of exploring participants' narratives in depth for themes of attachment and resiliency.

In general, the immediate precursors to homelessness described by participants had notable gender differences (Tessler, Rosenheck, & Gamache, 2001). For instance, Moxley, Washington, and Calligan (2012) noted that at least for older African American women, criminal activity, substance use, and serious mental health concerns were secondary pathways into homelessness when compared to more prevalent matters of: divorce, intimate partner violence, health-related employment barriers, lack of job accessibility, and housing accidents. While not mutually exclusive, discharge from an institution and alcohol and drug use concerns were commonly cited by male participants,

while eviction and interpersonal conflict was often salient for female participants (Tessler et al., 2001); this finding also emerged within my pilot study (Roche, 2012). To stop there would only serve to perpetuate the myths, prejudices, and disgust (Fiske, 2010; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002) individuals commonly hold of people who are homeless. Although such behaviors and conditions might serve as immediate precursors to homelessness, a more layered, contextualized understanding of an individual's pathway into homelessness, present circumstances, and outlook are needed.

According to Schmitz, Wagner, and Menke (2001), the impact of childhood poverty could be detrimental. Childhood poverty might also be compounded by experiences of childhood homelessness with regard to exposure to dangerous environments, one's sense of inadequate caregiver support, and interpersonal isolation. Despite the felt sense of inadequate support, most of the parents in their study reflected on their children in positive terms (Schmitz et al., 2001). Many of the children demonstrated strength in their abilities to focus on being brave, maintaining hope, and seeking out help from others though to a lesser extent than their housed peers (Schmitz et al., 2001). Arguably, such findings pointed to the need to more fully explore the activation and deactivation of the attachment system over time (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980; Gillath, Hart, Nofle, & Stockdale, 2009), the need to focus on other factors that contribute to strength and resilient responding, and the need to provide support for parents during such stressful transitions.

Their findings led Schmitz et al. (2001) to make a call for the need to research, understand, and encourage communal protective factors beyond the safety net of the homeless/transitional shelter itself. Communal responses are needed to help counteract

the impact of structural and individual risk factors (Schmitz et al., 2001). Since many individuals who experience extreme poverty and homelessness from an early stage of life are often transiently placed within unstable living conditions, there becomes a need to better recognize the multidimensional nature of attachment to “place” and the layers one must take into account considering the emotionally evocative nature of the word “home” (Lahman et al., 2013; Schmitz et al., 2001).

Unfortunately for many individuals who are homeless in adulthood, the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs; e.g., experiences of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, loss, separations, poverty, community violence, etc.) is an altogether common experience (Larkin & Park, 2012; Torchalla, Strehlau, Li, Schuetz, & Krausz, 2012). In recent history, greater clarity has been gained through correlations between experiences of adverse childhood experiences and homelessness in adulthood (Larkin & Park, 2012; Shelton, Taylor, Bonner, & van den Bree, 2009). For example, in the common effects model, Kendall-Tackett (2002) postulated that childhood maltreatment could lead to general dysfunctional patterns of cognitions, emotions, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships that could place one at further risk of developing more serious mental health conditions. On the other hand in the self-trauma model, Briere (2002) provided a more focal hypothesis regarding the impact of early maltreatment. In particular, the self-trauma model focused on childhood maltreatment as it related to disrupted and insecure attachment patterns, ongoing stress that generated negative internal working models for both self and others, and the adoption of what eventually became maladaptive patterns of emotional and interpersonal responses (Briere, 2002). This model was consistent with the postulates of attachment theory

(Bowlby, 1988). Yet it could be difficult and perhaps not desirable to try to parcel out these experiences from the broader context of a negative social environment marked by forces that underlie poverty and social class (Tsai et al., 2011).

In their sample, Larkin and Park (2012) found that 87% experienced at least one ACE, although 53% reported having four or more such experiences. Among the top four most frequently reported (emotional abuse, emotional neglect, loss of parent, and exposure to parental substance abuse) all lent consideration to the appropriateness of an attachment-based framework for exploring participants' narratives. Stein, Leslie, and Nyamathi (2002) too found evidence for the ill effects of childhood abuse and neglect, such that it was strongly correlated with lowered self-esteem, depression, more contemporary exposure to assaults, substance use, and ultimately increasing the likelihood of chronic homelessness. Additionally, there was evidence for a dose-response, such that accumulated risks of certain risk factors could have, or were at least associated with increasingly detrimental outcomes (Bowlby, 1988; Larkin & Park, 2012). Kennedy et al. (2010) also found evidence for the accumulation of risk factors or risk chains including lack of supportive caring from primary caregivers. Among the chronically homeless, Tsai et al. (2011) found three common clusters of retrospectively recalled childhood experiences including "numerous childhood problems, disrupted family, and relatively few childhood problems" (p. 853). Although differences among the three profiles were similar once the individual became more chronically homeless, the accumulation of ACEs was often associated with earlier entry into homelessness and more severe early substance use (Tsai et al., 2011).

Not only were ACEs found to be correlated with adult chronic and non-chronic homelessness, they were also found to greatly influence the path toward youth homelessness (Edidin et al., 2011). Early negative events have the potential to adversely impact neurocognitive development (i.e., myelination process, prefrontal cortex development and limbic system regulation; Charney, 2004; Edidin et al., 2011; Perry & Szalavitz, 2006; Yoshikawa et al., 2012) and, relatedly, academic functioning and various health indicators. Some of those impacts were due to high mobility, exposure to physically or sexually dangerous environments as well as relationships (Watson, 2011), lack of adequate role models, fear of stigmatization, and insufficiently met basic needs such as nutrition. Neurological developmental disruptions could leave one susceptible to later trauma due to difficulties with stress tolerance and emotional regulation (Kim & Ford, 2006). As found by Edidin et al. (2011), “Studies have found that as few as 20 to 30% of homeless youth graduate from high school,” (p. 359), and rates of substance use disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, and major mood disorders are elevated far above and beyond that of the housed population, commonly with experiences of trauma as an underlying factor. While the focus of the present investigation was not on the population of so-called runaways, throwaways, systems youth, or street youths (Edidin et al., 2011; McKenzie-Mohr et al., 2011), it was important to explore connections between ACEs and other circumstances as such early experiences emerged in some participants’ narratives.

Just because one identifies the correlates or risk factors for homelessness, one does not know how they were experienced and integrated, or not, into individuals’ narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and relational scripts (Bretherton, 1996). Although conducted in Madrid, an undertaking by Muñoz, Vázquez, Bermejo, and

Vázquez (1999) was unique as it allowed participants the space to voice how they had integrated perceived causality into their own narratives, albeit quantitatively.

Discovering that the majority of stress life events occurred either before or during a first episode of homelessness with many indicating incidents occurring well before their first episode, they found participants ascribed economic problems, degradation of social ties, and struggles with mental illnesses as most causally related to their present state of homelessness (Muñoz et al., 1999). Although economic problems were most prevalent, participants also strongly connected deaths of loved ones, mental health concerns, and general feelings of loneliness and abandonment as influencing their path to homelessness. Once again, these findings made a strong argument for the relevance of a narrative perspective informed by both attachment and resiliency theory.

Yet in general, the majority of individuals who experience potentially traumatic events and relationships are able to respond resiliently (Bonanno, 2004; Masten, 2001) and do not go on to develop major mental health concerns. So this necessitates the question: what strengths and protective factors are involved in this process? For instance, Stein et al. (2002) found evidence for the potential buffering role of self-esteem and empowerment training in response to recent violence exposure. Tsai et al. (2011) observed that the exploration of resiliency elements would be a beneficial future direction for the pathways literature.

Homelessness and Distress

While the predominant focus of this investigation related to the desire to illuminate participants' strengths, sources of resiliency, and possible counter-narratives (APA, 2009; Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010), one must also acknowledge the inherent

difficulties that can come with living in a precarious, homeless state. Although the literature for this topic could be reviewed at substantial length given the historically deficit and victim-based perspectives that exist, major themes are reviewed in cursory. For starters, acts of violence against those who are homeless are so prevalent and recurrent that some agencies such as the NCH (2013) are pushing for such acts of violence to be considered a hate crime. Without adequate safeguard or protective factors, individuals who are homeless might be forced into prostitution, violently attacked, or decline due to mental health and substance use concerns (Nooe & Patterson, 2010).

Many investigations have focused on substance use as a key factor leading up to and exacerbating homelessness and the experience of marginality in interactive ways (McNaughton, 2008; McQuiston, Gorroochurn, Hsu, & Caton, 2013). While reasoning for initiating or sustaining substance use was variable along thematic lines (e.g., coping and avoiding present circumstances, a means of connecting with others in their environment, or an ongoing attempt to cope with prior traumatic experiences), it was noteworthy that those who struggled with substance use often continued to struggle even after being housed (McNaughton, 2008). This might suggest that unresolved trauma, introjected experiences of discrimination and marginalization, and other interpersonal and intrapersonal factors were both related to and separate from one's housing status.

Reports regarding social support levels among those who were homeless were also relatively mixed, ranging from indications of low social support, marginalization, increased ties with substance using peers, to the benefits of prosocial familial, friend, and institutional supports. Rokach (2005) found that when compared to matched, housed samples, those who were homeless not only experienced higher levels of loneliness but

also felt more isolated from themselves and others while experiencing less periods of growth from being alone due in part to their heightened sense of rejection from others. The literature on social support among those who were homeless was somewhat mixed; Zugazaga (2008) noted that the perceived quality of social support might be at comparable levels compared to housed samples even if potentially smaller in size. Individuals who were homeless with mental disorders might experience more chronic homelessness and diminished familial and friend social support although individual pathways remained unclear and required idiographic understanding (Zugazaga, 2008).

Calsyn and Morse (1992) reported that estimates of more severe mental health concerns among the homeless population were 20-40%. Elevated rates have emerged most often among the chronically homeless (NAEH, 2013). Psychiatric symptoms while homeless have been predicted by a lack in current life satisfaction, prior psychiatric hospitalization, increasing levels of stressful life events, relative absence of social support, related substance abuse problems, and being unhappy in one's childhood (McQuiston et al., 2013). Estimates of mental health concerns have varied widely in studies of those who are homeless in the United States, arguably due to one's lens (i.e., deficits-based or strengths-based), recognition of the impact of trauma, and the subset of the homeless population one is considering (i.e., first time or acute, episodic, or chronic). Fazel, Khasla, Doll, and Geddes (2008) reported estimates by diagnosis among the homeless population: depression and psychotic illness (2.8%-42.3%), alcohol dependence (8.1%-58.5%), and drug dependence (4.5%-54.2%).

In light of the recent increases in poverty rates as well as the adverse connections between poverty/low socioeconomic status and physical health, mental health, and

personal resources, DeForge et al. (2008) sought to better understand variance in depression levels among a sample of individuals from a lower socioeconomic status. Also, given the negative impact of homelessness on children, the authors were concerned with its longitudinal effects. With a sample of 500 from two different church-sponsored, multisite social service centers, the authors tested how much of the variance in psychological distress (i.e., depression) could be explained by one's level of personal resources and previous adverse life events, such as homelessness, and prior episodes of depression. Ultimately, after using a three-step hierarchical regression analysis, they found higher levels of depression were accounted for by older age, more involved histories of homelessness (i.e., if they experienced a history of homelessness prior to age 21), more health problems, a history of mental illness, and lower self-esteem, mastery, and felt sense of mattering (DeForge et al., 2008).

Those who are homeless were found to be 34 times more likely to commit suicide, 25 times more likely to die prematurely while homeless, and 150 times more likely to be murdered (Shaw, Dorling, & Smith, 1999). Torchalla et al. (2012) observed more conservative estimates of rates of death by suicide (i.e., 2.3 to six times more likely than the general population). However, they found that various forms of childhood maltreatment were associated with an increased risk for suicide with the exception of physical neglect (Torchalla et al., 2012). This risk level was amplified among women and those with existing mental health concerns as well as with accumulated experiences of maltreatment. According to Chambers et al. (2013), the mental health related impact of homelessness can be especially pronounced among women, especially in the absence of dependent children, when low social support, chronic health concerns, recent

substance use, or recent physical/sexual assaults have occurred. The particular patterns observed among their participants lent further evidence to the reciprocal and complex relationship between experiences while homeless and mental health concerns (Chambers et al., 2013) as well as the need for family-based and trauma-informed care for many individuals.

Kim and Ford (2006) focused on the effects of increased trauma exposure such as exposure to or witnessing non-sexual violence and struggling with life-threatening illnesses among men who were homeless. They found that rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were often elevated after becoming homeless (Kim & Ford, 2006). They also noted that a portion of the elevated rates of trauma exposure and PTSD might stem from the disproportionate levels of veterans who are homeless and who have higher rates of trauma exposure, which ultimately might offset their greater access to resources. Secure childhood familial attachment, secure peer attachment, as well as a strong sense of self-efficacy, religiosity, and overall resilience have some tentative evidence for serving as protective factors in the veteran population (Benda, 2001). Such findings pointed to these variables potentially serving as protective factors among the more general homeless population as well.

In the general population of those diagnosed with PTSD, co-morbid rates of substance use disorders are fairly high (i.e., 20% to 38% estimates; Torchalla et al., 2014). Women commonly showed higher rates of trauma-induced substance use than men, higher rates of PTSD in general (hypothesized to be due to earlier trauma exposure and reliance on internalizing and avoidance-based coping), and higher rates of sexual as opposed to physical trauma (Torchalla et al., 2014). In an effort to parcel out the impact

of co-morbid substance use disorders and PTSD across men and women who are homeless, Torchalla et al. (2014) sampled 500 individuals who were homeless. They found that while the majority of the sample did not have PTSD or a substance use disorder, their rates were elevated compared to the general population; rates of substance use were comparable across genders although women had higher rates of PTSD and co-morbid PTSD and substance use (Torchalla et al., 2014). Those with PTSD and substance use concerns also showed elevations on somatic symptoms, psychological distress, and suicidal ideation for women, while men showed higher rates of incarceration (Torchalla et al., 2014). When considering protective/risk factors and key turning points in participant narratives, one needs to be mindful of coping strategies adopted and gender differences.

Across the board (i.e., substance abuse, general health status, mental health, food insufficiency, chronic conditions), those who are homeless are typically challenged by chronic and emergent health conditions at greater odds than those of their housed counterparts (Lebrun-Harris et al., 2013). As Lebrun-Harris and colleagues (2013) observed, a homelessness status is associated with twice the odds of having unmet health needs and using more emergency-based services. Some of these differences were moderated by increased levels of education and improved prior health states (Lebrun-Harris et al., 2013). Dimsdale, Mills, Patterson, Ziegler, and Dillon (1994) found that in addition to experiencing high stress levels overall, their participants' stress levels accounted for a large proportion of the variance in worsened beta-adrenergic functioning, which is necessary for stress regulation and responding. However, this was further accounted for by use of approach or avoidant coping strategies (Dimsdale et al., 1994).

While this section focused more explicitly on distress experiences among those who are homeless, the goal was not to merely focus on negative effects of homelessness since pathways into respective difficulties must be understood on a more idiographic level and counterbalanced with relevant protective factors and strengths.

Stereotypes, Stigma, and Introjection

Over the years, individual and structural homelessness attributions have experienced their share of ebbs and flows (Lee et al., 2010; Main, 1998). This is not to say that individual attributions have been lacking in the public sphere. Mental illness, addiction to alcohol and other drugs, insufficient social skills, laziness, and a poor work ethic are some of the more commonly cited individual reasons for homelessness. For example, Finley and Diversi (2010) noted several media forums in which a blaming perspective was well entrenched within the rhetoric, often calling for the removal of support for homelessness services. Hocking and Lawrence (2000) found that most U.S. citizens hold negative views of those who are homeless; paraphrasing President Reagan, “Because homelessness is seen largely as a character flaw rather than as a product of socioeconomic circumstances, homeless people are often held personally responsible for their plight” (p. 92). I hold firmly to the belief that psychologists and others can point out the layered nature of homelessness to help deconstruct these views and challenge lingering stereotypes that automatically link those who are homeless with mental illness.

Yet such statements from respected figures perpetuate the stereotype that homeless individuals are frequently mentally ill and with violent tendencies. Researchers have often demonstrated the prevalence of alcohol and other drug abuse (AODA), and mental illness in the homeless population (Main, 1998; Rodell, Benda, & Rodell, 2003).

Alcohol and other drug abuse and mental illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder and schizophrenia are often associated as both an influencing factor and an end result of homelessness. It is speculated that mental illness creates problems in living that make steady employment, and thus sustaining a home, difficult to maintain. In reality, many individual, systemic, and sociocultural variables might influence the process of becoming homeless, not all of which have been thoroughly explored (Friedman & Levine-Holdowsky, 1997; Main, 1998).

Yet, once prejudice is formed, it is difficult to untangle even in the face of contradictory data (D. Woody, personal communication, July, 30, 2011). Thus, even if structural accounts were able to fully explain one's homelessness, it might not change assumptions others make about nor alter their reactions to that person. Belcher (1987) cited an epidemiological study that found 30% of homeless individuals might be seriously mentally ill while 20% had been discharged from a state hospital; according to these data, 70% of individuals who were homeless in this sample either did not have mental illness or had less severe forms. Thus, they were the victims of stereotypes and generalizations and likely had different treatment needs. Rossi (1990) reported that the average estimate across studies was that around 33.3% of those who were homeless had mental illness. Relatedly, Whaley and Link (1998) explored the impact of race on the stereotyping of people who are homeless. They found that when Caucasian participants endorsed the view that Black/African American individuals represented a large proportion of the homeless population, they were far likelier to have a perception of that population as dangerous (Whaley & Link, 1998). As a natural correlate then, they would be far more likely to have a reaction of disgust than pity (Fiske, 2010).

Hocking and Lawrence (2000) espoused the belief that although mentally ill homeless individuals comprised a small percentage of homelessness, the bizarre appearance of particular individuals leads to wholesale attributions to all. While still a serious societal challenge, the focus on individuals who are both mentally ill and homeless arguably detracts from the focus on economic and social structures contributing to homelessness (Dowell & Farmer, 1992; Swick, 2005). Regardless of the true cause of a given individual's predicament, he/she still faces the stigma the general public associates with homelessness. Thus, oftentimes the downfall of the individual approach to conceptualizing homelessness is that the attributions can be overgeneralized into stereotypes that breed prejudice.

Related to this idea, Fiske et al. (2002) developed what they called the stereotype content model. The stereotype content model considers the dimensions of competence and warmth to be fundamental to stereotype formation. According to their model, individuals who are homeless were rated as having low competence due to their lack of status as well as low on warmth due to their perceived level of competition (Fiske et al., 2002). Status is fairly self-explanatory but the competition component can be thought of in terms of feeling physically threatened or in terms of feeling that individuals who are homeless are a financial drain on society. Fiske et al. theorized that out-groups that were perceived to be low on both competence and warmth would be met with a reaction of disgust, a theory later provided with further support through functional magnetic resonance imaging analysis (Harris & Fiske, 2006). Some of the most common societal stereotypes surrounding "the homeless" were they were undeserving of help, were deserving of their circumstances, and were socially inadequate, lazy, vulnerable,

substance abusing, and low in both warmth and competence (Fiske, 2010; Hamid, Wykes, & Stansfeld, 1993).

While a whole host of variables can affect one's appraisal of individuals who are homeless, I would argue there is a self-serving component to reacting with disgust that is related to cognitive dissonance (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). If one typically considers oneself a giving, caring, progressive individual, then the dissonance one might feel when one does not offer assistance or basic acknowledgement can be reduced by viewing that individual with disgust. It might also serve the dual purpose of distancing oneself from the situation. Indeed, as Shaw, Batson, and Todd (1994) found, individuals often adopt certain strategies to avoid feeling empathy for another and thereby feeling compelled to help. Essentially, disgust and contempt for those who are homeless can serve as a mind guard by protecting oneself from feeling urged to help and the realization that it is a distinct possibility that given the right circumstances, they too could be homeless.

If there is anything the literature on stereotype threat (Steele, 1997) can teach everyone, it is the existence of a stereotype, when made salient, has the power to significantly alter one's functioning. To some extent, it does not matter that there are those who not only take a more empathic, progressive stance but also are willing to actually provide some degree of tangible help. Stereotype threat and stigma have the power to impact individuals who are homeless because of the sheer fact that negative stereotypes and attributions exist that are ambiguous as to who endorses them as well as the fact that their homelessness is salient to them during every waking moment (Lee et al., 2010; Steele, 1997).

Several qualitative studies have documented the effects stigma, stereotypes, and homelessness itself can have on an individual. In a small qualitative study, Riggs and Coyle (2002) found that individuals categorized their homelessness in both physical and psychological terms. The physical side was more straightforward in terms of lack of a stable shelter or safe place to store one's belongings. In terms of psychological changes, homelessness was associated with "feeling isolated, rejected or alienated, lacking an emotional attachment to or identification with a place...a loss of identity and person-hood whilst homeless," (Riggs & Coyle, 2002, p. 5). Those who have simply moved to a new city or switched jobs might recall experiencing some of those emotions, albeit in a transitory manner. If recent change is enough to evoke such powerful emotions, it can be a powerful exercise to imagine recent change combined with a constant state of flux and an environment that potentially reinforces those feelings.

Individuals who are homeless might feel devalued as a result of real or felt experiences of discrimination and prejudice; they might cope with that by using other relationships as negative comparisons (Boydell et al., 2000). In essence, individuals who are homeless might try to separate their sense of self from the negative stereotypes of the group of individuals who are homeless as a whole in order to find some positives ways of maintaining esteem (Boydell et al., 2000). This was related to the observation of Boydell et al. (2000) that many individuals who are homeless go through the process of compartmentalizing their past, current, and future self because of how threatening the experience of being homeless can be to their identity: "Past, present, and future blend into one another as homeless individuals (for a number of reasons related to their biographies

and context) cling to selves situated in the past or create selves oriented to the future” (p. 30).

A parallel study of stigmatization was conducted by Lankenau (1999) with homeless, inner-city panhandlers. Lankenau discussed how panhandlers were especially vulnerable to the effects of stigma because the very act of panhandling made one’s potential homelessness public. This alone could have damaging effects to one’s self-esteem and self-concept. Matters were worsened in light of the constant scrutiny from innumerable passersby. Worse yet was the dehumanizing avoidance and humiliation that came from constant badgering (Lankenau, 1999). As a result of observing individuals persevere day in and day out, Lankenau concluded these individuals had to have been “stronger than dirt” (p. 289). For these individuals, Lankenau observed a stigma-buffering tactic of developing an ongoing rapport with those individuals that did offer some turn of kindness. Not only did such a strategy offer potential financial incentive but it also safeguarded against the damaging psychological effects that go along with the stigma against panhandlers and homeless individuals.

Many individuals might not want to access services in the first place because the fear of fear of stigma is so great they would rather take their chances than risk being labeled as an individual who is homeless (Riggs & Coyle, 2002). Kryda and Compton (2009) discussed how many individuals who are homeless have a general mistrust of outreach workers. Counselors and outreach workers might also have to overcome potential hurdles associated with a particular city that has less than favorable legislation toward those who are homeless (Bancroft, 2012; Wakin, 2008). Even when counselors and outreach workers are able to establish themselves as trustworthy, empathic,

promoting of autonomy, and from a likable organization, the perception might be that services will not be adequate, accessible, or reliable (Kryda & Compton, 2009).

Public Perception

Middle-class and affluent adolescents have often been found to be more likely than adolescents from poor and working-class backgrounds to ascribe individual models of economic responsibility and blame (Chafel & Neitzel, 2005). Additionally, White, male, and politically conservative Americans are more likely than non-White Americans to attribute economic inequality to individualistic factors, espouse negative views of those who are homeless, and favor restrictive means of addressing the matter (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Lee et al., 2010). Within the broader culture, Lee et al. (2010) noted shifting trends in news coverage of homelessness; while the 1980s often involved more heterogeneous and sympathetic portrayals, they have recently given way to more stories of disruption, disorder, and deviance.

Fortunately, not everyone endorses negative and biased stereotypes of individuals who are homeless, nor are they set in stone (Barnett, Quackenbush, & Pierce, 1997). In fact, recent investigations have shown evidence of potential benefits for implementing a “lovingkindness” meditation as a means of improving implicit attitudes toward those who are homeless (Kang, Gray, & Dovidio, 2014; Parks, Birtel, & Crisp, 2014). There is also some evidence that the Faces of Homelessness program, an educational outreach effort to humanize individuals who are homeless through visual mediums, could generate greater charitable attitudes and help challenge viewers’ over-reliance on individual-level attributions for homelessness (Wisehart, Whatley, & Briihl, 2013).

Hocking and Lawrence (2000) attempted to see if prosocial communication could improve attitudes toward homeless individuals. Research tended to sustain that to change attitudes, contact must be “long term, is voluntary, includes attractive members of the out-group, promotes the discovery of ideological similarities, emphasizes status equality, and involves a degree of personal intimacy” (Hocking & Lawrence, 2000, pp. 92-93). Upliftingly, they found positive change in participant attitudes toward individuals who were homeless. Not only did participants begin to find the individuals to be less blameworthy for their homelessness, they also found them to be more socially attractive, more likely to attribute bad luck as a cause, more likely to help in the future, and equally likely to look at various structural causes of homelessness (Hocking & Lawrence, 2000). The positive attitude change that resulted from taking the time to truly interact with individuals who were homeless was difficult to place a value on in terms of direct service, stigma reduction, and personal growth (Hocking & Lawrence, 2000). After all, one should bear in mind that one is always interacting with a person in a situation but the person always comes first.

In a survey of elementary, high school, and college students, Barnett et al. (1997) found the majority of participants endorsed positive, helping attitudes toward those who were homeless; however, some notable gender and age differences were noted. Across all three age groups, women indicated they would be more willing to help and interact with homeless individuals. They also endorsed beliefs consistent with structural attributions for homelessness. While more positive than not, males had a greater tendency to endorse attributions that suggested homeless individuals either had some uncontrollable misfortune or some sort of character flaw (Barnett et al., 1997). At the

same time, all saw homelessness as a problem in the United States and, with the exception of the elementary group, most favored longer-term modes of assistance over handouts. Not unlike the study by Whaley and Link (1998), those who endorsed negative, individual attributions had higher scores related to fear and anger toward individuals who were homeless. The negative influence of stereotypes and prejudice in combination with the potential for those beliefs to be improved pointed to the potential benefits of more fully understanding diverse experiences, pathways, and strengths of those who are homeless.

Experiential Narratives

Drawing from four different studies, Tompsett, Fowler, and Toro (2009) sought to further demonstrate the need to understand the diverse needs and characteristics of individuals who are homeless across different stages of life. They reviewed previous literature that demonstrated mixed findings in homelessness duration and chronicity, physical and mental health disparities, substance use patterns, and differing types of life stressors and social support across the life span (Tompsett et al., 2009). In their results, they found adolescents reported a shorter duration of homelessness, lower number of life stressors, fewer physical symptoms, larger social networks, less clinically significant mental health problems, and fewer diagnoses related to alcohol and drug abuse (Tompsett et al., 2009). Differences between young adults and older adults were less pronounced. Younger adults reported less time homeless, fewer physical symptoms, more life stressors, and higher levels of hostile and paranoid psychological symptoms (Tompsett et al., 2009).

In an engaging first-hand ethnographic account, Yankoski (2005) elected to relinquish many of his privileges for a period of time in order to try to live life in a homeless state across different cities in the United States. Drawing from his own personal experiences, encounters with others, and the stories of those who were homeless alongside him, numerous observations and reflections were made about living homeless in various shelters and city streets in the United States. As Yankoski observed first hand, the demographics and composition of the population of the homeless varies by city and context. He also noted that contexts could impact the dispersion of needed resources such as Phoenix, Arizona, which was found to be very spread out. Yankoski reflected on his experiences, noting, “An ongoing struggle to find safety, a place to sleep, a bathroom, and food becomes dehumanizing for anyone. One experience at a time, a person’s dignity and sense of self-worth gets stripped away” (p. 113). Such accounts made exploring the relationship between the individual and his/her perceived context and how this related to protective and risk factors all the more worthwhile.

Although Yankoski (2005) noted many experiences of support, strength, and connection within the community of homeless individuals, he noted many struggles arose due to how individual community members and service agencies treated them as well as their lack of felt community with the broader public: “We were shunned and forgotten and ignored by most people who walked past us—good, acceptable people who looked like Sami and I used to look, and maybe just like you” (p. 22). Making an observation that aligned with the formation of implicit attitudes, Yankoski found that children were more open to treat those who were homeless with humanity: “Haven’t learned to ignore what they see, so they can actually take in the world as it is. While kids might pretend

people who don't exist do, it's the parents who pretend that unwanted people who do exist don't" (p. 65). When staying in Denver, Colorado, Yankoski found many of the shelters and churches had lumped homelessness with substance abuse. He recalled, "Of the twenty-seven chapel services I attended, about twenty focused on hell, condemnation, sin, and eternal suffering" (p. 48). Yankoski was wise enough to note his experience of living homeless was somewhat artificial due to his ability to return to a housed state when he chose. His accounts did reflect the dynamic way in which individuals who were homeless interacted with their environment, the impact stereotypes and prejudice had on those who were homeless, and the broad set of assumptions many individuals made regarding the type of people who became homeless as well as how they came to be there.

Interventions and Reintegration

The APA (2009) noted that a "range of supportive services, such as addiction treatment, mental health services, medical treatment, intensive case management, assertive community treatment, critical time intervention, and ecologically based family therapy" (p. 2) have become more commonplace for intervening with homelessness. This stands in addition to more recent treatment first and rapid re-housing or housing first initiatives. Rapid re-housing or housing first initiatives involve efforts typically geared toward those who are more chronically homeless to provide non-contingency, safe, stable, and affordable housing as a foundation for future treatment and support (Polvere, Macnaughton, & Piat, 2013). Treatment first initiatives require preliminary psychiatric and substance abuse related treatment that can lead to housing access (APA, 2009). Housing first and treatment first initiatives represent different approaches rather than

falling along a similar continuum where psychologists can play a role in parceling out which individuals might be better suited for which type of approach (APA, 2009).

Larkin and Park (2012) found that ACEs were also correlated with prior service use including involvement in the criminal justice system for emotional or substance related problems. From participants' perspectives, they found trauma-informed care (e.g., restorative integral support; Larkin & Park, 2012) was likely essential for challenging the intergenerational transmission of homelessness and fostering resilience. It should be noted that many exposed to ACEs found their respective care access helpful; as such, counseling services might be an essential protective factor to allow individuals to respond resiliently to their circumstances of present homelessness. As Paradis (2000) noted, focusing on diagnostic classification while failing to recognize the role of trauma wherein individuals' presentations are more reflective of a response to extreme stress or an adaptive survival strategy could only serve to perpetuate stereotypes and lead to ill-informed service provision. Access to suitable counseling might pose a barrier despite the call for social justice and aspirational ethics to devote a portion of one's time to more charitable counseling endeavors (APA, 2002; Morrell-Bellai et al., 2000; Vasquez, 2012).

Not everyone is in favor of seeking out traditional mental health services. When seeking to help transition someone into more stable living situations, service barriers are often due in part to a lack of coherence and difficulty understanding various contributing factors (Kryda & Compton, 2009). Fear of safety, lack of information, and trust issues also play a role (Kryda & Compton, 2009), all of which might be impacted by filtration based on one's prior attachment experiences (Tavecchio, Thomeer, & Meeus, 1999). Thus, the transition from being homeless to not has the potential to be impeded or

facilitated by shelter residents, shelter staff, and arguably, the community at large (Kryda & Compton, 2009). Such awareness can improve service delivery from which the counseling psychology profession could also become involved through consultative and psychoeducational outreach.

Depending on an individual's position, history, relationship to his/her community, and unique set of protective and risk factors present in his/her life, there are a whole host of considerations to take into account as possible barriers or facilitators of treatment and reintegration. Regardless, certain common factors could apply more broadly to this situation. In a study of critical incidents that helped individuals transition from being homeless, MacKnee and Mervyn (2002) found that establishing supportive relationships, building self-esteem, and changing one's perceptions of others and their communities were needed for successful transitions. "Social supports can, however, act as a protective factor and thus prevent the development of homelessness" (Tavecchio et al., 1999, p. 247).

When working with those who are homeless, service providers must use empathic and relationally-oriented skills, recognize the difficulty of the work and potential for burnout, and know that one's credibility is being judged; this makes the establishment of one's trust, credibility, and humility essential (APA, 2009). In light of such considerations, I now turn toward the consideration of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980) given its potential to relate to factors such as adverse childhood experiences; one's perceptions of others, themselves, and their communities; as well as its role in therapeutic working alliances. Although there has been a somewhat limited focus drawing explicitly from attachment theory with regard to understanding homelessness,

especially from a narrative/life course perspective, I examine links between homelessness and adverse childhood experiences, the impact of insecure attachment style on one's response to adverse circumstances, and touch on how positive attachment relationships can serve as a protective factor.

Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1977, 1980, 1988) is largely credited as the developer of modern-day attachment theory. Bowlby saw the need to form affectional bonds as an innate human tendency. Much of Bowlby's theorizing (1969) regarding the attachment system stemmed from studies regarding poor maternal care, Harlow's (1958) work on imprinting, and from observations noted in young children during periods of parental separation who were in residential nurseries, foster systems, and, originally, children who were considered homeless. Drawing on principles of evolutionary and social psychology, Bowlby noted this innate tendency was adaptive for the purposes of maintaining ties to the social group, thus better ensuring one's survival and optimal functioning. From a statistical standpoint, it is far more dangerous for one to be alone than to be with others (Bowlby, 1973). Beyond this, the formation of strong, loving bonds is thought to be a highly positive experience; thus, we are quick to form and maintain them.

This drive is so strong that Bowlby (1969) posited the desire to maintain loving bonds is as primary a response as fear/safety and sexual instincts. Attachment behaviors are adapted for the purposes of (a) maintaining proximity to important others, and (b) restoring those connections after a period of separation or during a time of felt need (Bowlby, 1969). This behavior involves both an instinctual and learned set of responses designed to satisfy one's predilection toward seeking proximity and maintaining contact

with select attachment figures (Bowlby, 1988). I say select as Bowlby found that a lack of attachment figure discrimination was indicative of disturbance. In addition, one's attachment behavior is thought to be fairly context-specific, such that for a given individual, his/her attachment behavior will vary across caregiver, peer, and romantic partner attachments (Caron, Lafontaine, Bureau, Levesque, & Johnson, 2012). While not appearing in identical ways, the fundamental underlying processes involved with the attachment system were found to apply cross-culturally and cross-species (Bowlby, 1988). Attachment theory is also considered to be a lifespan theory wherein there is a strong relationship between individuals' experiences with their caregivers and their ability to form affectional bonds later in life (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980).

Bowlby (1969) recognized the importance of one's context as this inborn tendency fundamentally interacts with one's environment over time. Bowlby also recognized that the quality of one's early interactions with caregivers has a large impact on the development of internal working models (IWMs) for self (e.g., self-esteem, sense of volition, viewing oneself as worthy and lovable, having physical and emotional needs met) and for others (e.g., beliefs about deserved treatment, comfort with closeness, expectations of abandonment, ability to trust). Based on the quality of one's interactions with caregivers and significant others, IWMs are thought to not only influence whether or not someone views him/herself as worthy of love and attention but also whether or not he/she expects a reciprocal relationship in his/her interactions with others (Bowlby, 1969, 1973).

In essence, IWMs are thought to reflect conscious or unconscious appraising processes that guide behavior, monitor the level of closeness/availability in one's key

relationships, and allow one to communicate felt needs to others (Bowlby, 1969; Johnson et al., 2010). These IWMs are often thought to be fairly sophisticated and well-developed by the age of five (Bowlby, 1988). Although Bowlby acknowledged that one's attachment style might evolve over time, he posited it remains fairly stable and can be largely impacted by environmental experiences during sensitive periods early in life (Bowlby, 1969). This makes early caregiver attunement that much more important. Bretherton (1990) pointed to the role of memory encoding. She conceptualized a hierarchically arranged, overlapping mental schema for the self, others, and the world capable of being updated through short-term/long-term encoding in light of new experiences. Since IWMs are comprised of multiple interlinked hierarchies of encoded memory, insight gained at one level would not automatically be followed by insight at another level; this might explicate insecure attachments' resistance to change (Bretherton, 1990).

Internal working models and related attachment behaviors are thought to become increasingly nuanced and sophisticated over time while maintaining their innate intent of securing bonds in ways one has learned (Bowlby, 1969, 1988). In many cases, children come to mimic their caregivers' patterns of interpersonal relations through vicarious learning. While one's attachment style is certainly an emotionally learned response to the environment, Bowlby (1977) postulated it might become further entrenched through the vicious cycle of insecure attachment or self-reinforcing nature of secure attachment. Based on the concept of IWMs, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) proposed four categories of attachment style: secure attachment as marked by positive internal models of both self and others, preoccupied attachment as marked by negative internal models of

self and positive internal models of others, dismissive attachment as marked by a positive internal model of self and a negative internal model of others, and a fearful attachment style as marked by negative internal models of both self and others.

Once established, attachment styles have been shown to have long-term stability (Fraley, 2002). At the same time, various conditions of attachment threat such as parental abandonment/neglect, interactions with significant others, or the process of becoming homeless have the potential to alter one's IWMs and thereby one's attachment style (Bowlby, 1988). Depending on the consistency and valence of these encounters, more secure patterns of attachment might emerge later on as well (Bowlby, 1980). Before conducting a meta-analysis on existing attachment data, Fraley (2002) proposed two different models (the revisionist and prototype models) for how IWMs that comprise one's attachment style might or might not change over time. A revisionist model suggests that correlations between adult attachment and early attachment would eventually reach zero as new experiences continually update IWMs and the resultant level of attachment security. Conversely, the prototype model indicates that attachment is relatively plastic over the course of a year but stable over time. For example, following a relationship one might temporarily shift to having a more dismissive attachment style despite being generally secure. Meta-analysis data suggested that attachment is moderately stable across the first 19 years and is best conceptualized with the prototype model (Fraley, 2002). In further support of attachment theory being construed as a lifespan theory, Bowlby (1988) noted that the attachment patterns of one-year-olds are highly predictive of patterns at age six, while Zayas, Mischel, Shoda, and Aber (2011)

found that deprived maternal caregiving experiences at 18 months has been found to predict self-reported anxiety and avoidance attachment strategies at age 23.

One of the historical criticisms of Bowlby's work (1969) has been the overemphasis on the relationship with the mother and how others have extrapolated the theory to label mothers as bad parents when away from their child (e.g., working). Albeit predominantly in footnotes, Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) clearly indicated that mothering behavior could extend to multiple individuals and males/father figures (van IJzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2008) and there is inherently a degree of good enough caregiver responding that allows for secure patterns of relatedness to develop. Further developments of the theory recognized the vibrant role of father, siblings, and other caregivers (DeKlyen, Speltz, & Greenberg, 1998). While similar attachment patterns might emerge between various attachment figures, the low correlation among these figures suggests attachment can be relationally specific.

Another common criticism presented against attachment theory relates to the false assumption of universal application across cultures (Keller, 2013) wherein its tenets have been noted to align with "the conception of psychological autonomy, adaptive for Western middle-class, but deviate from the cultural values of many non-Western and mainly rural ecosocial environments" (p. 175). Keller (2013) recounted several studies that demonstrated variable proportions of attachment styles across cultures, yet others argued there is more attachment-related heterogeneity within a given culture than across (van IJzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988). Others have also argued that despite cross-cultural variance, the basic assumptions of attachment theory tend to hold up fairly well

when considering gender, country of origin, and language (van IJzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010).

Secure Attachment Development

Drawing from the Oxford English Dictionary, Bowlby (1973) described secure as a state of being “free from care, apprehension, anxiety, or alarm” (p. 182). Taking a closer look at the effects of maternal sensitivity on attachment, Nievar (2008) concluded that synchronous, reciprocal mother-child interactions were essential for secure attachment formation. Sensitivity was a weaker predictor of attachment in studies of lower-income families. Also, Nievar made the important observation that caregivers could respond intrusively to an infant’s signals and even more so in adolescence. This furthered the argument for the importance of qualitative appropriateness and not necessarily the specific frequency of parental interventions. While examining the impact of parental warmth, autonomy granting, and behavioral control during middle childhood and adolescence, Karavasilis, Doyle, and Markiewicz (2003) found very specific correlations between parental behaviors and attachment. In general, secure attachment was associated with parental warmth and autonomy granting.

Bowlby (1988) found those who grew up in stable, caring, and attentive homes were more likely to become well-adjusted and capable of responding to adversity later in life: “For a person to know that an attachment figure is available and responsive gives him a strong and pervasive feeling of security, and so encourages him to continue the relationship” (p. 27). Indeed, an easy reciprocity of parent-child communication could be an important component of this process. Developmentally, this began with more indiscriminate signaling of needs that evolved toward signals directed toward certain

caregivers (Bowlby, 1988). As one developed a wider range of motion, the signals toward attachment figures became more active while, over time, the child and his/her attachment figure developed a particularized way in which they strove toward mutual goals or lack thereof (Bowlby, 1969).

Sensitive responding, especially during the early stages of a child's development, is thought to increase one's ability to self-soothe and protest periods of caregiver absence less (Bowlby, 1969, 1988). This mainly relates to social interaction, expressing positive emotions, and responding to signaling behavior such as crying (Bowlby, 1969). When caregivers are able to consistently meet the young infant's needs, the caregiver comes to be viewed as a secure base wherein the environment becomes safe to explore (Bowlby, 1988). These securely attached infants are able to form mental representations of their caregivers in order to reduce anxiety during periods of caregiver separation (Bowlby, 1973). If successful, they are more likely to experience their caregiver as a secure base, exhibit exploratory behaviors, and increasingly develop the ability to self-soothe. When a secure base is present, active attachment behaviors tend to decrease and environmental exploration begins; indeed, prior perceived danger becomes habituated in the face of absent consequences and available care (Bowlby, 1973). Although attuned caregivers actively maintain proximity during the early stages of development, secure attachment continues to flourish over time as individuals are granted more autonomy with regard to how they choose to maintain proximity. This gradual shifting of caregiving, to secure base, to healthy levels of separation-individuation over time is thought to allow for more secure and adaptive behaviors in adulthood (Bowlby, 1973).

Attachment formation is not a passive process on the part of the infant but rather an active one (Salter-Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1989). Certainly, there is a reciprocal influence between the infant's temperament and the caregiver's responsiveness. Bowlby (1969, 1988) was also quick to observe that it is not just about placing responsibility on the parent as there is an inherently reciprocal dynamic among a child's in-born dispositions, the environmental supports or lack thereof, and the caregiver's ability to respond accordingly. As Bowlby (1988) observed, "Some infants are born difficult, so the argument runs, and the mothers' adverse reactions to them are only to be expected" (, p. 49). Difficult temperament and the inability to occupy or entertain oneself could further complicate this dynamic.

An important caveat of such a line of inquiry has to do with the reciprocal influence of parental behavior and child temperament. For instance, Karavasilis et al. (2003) noted that secure children might be less dependent on strict limit setting (e.g., behavior control) as they are more capable of demonstrating age-appropriate behavior than their insecure counterparts. Cook (2000) sought to examine the role of relational reciprocity in the formation of IWMs and attachment. In general, it was shown that IWMs were not just a cognitive process but a socially influenced one as well (Cook, 2000). While examining the effects of family, actor, partner, and specific relationships, Cook found that individual and dyadic relationship variables as well as the specific individual significantly affected attachment security. Essentially, evidence for the reciprocity of attachment was demonstrated by the fact that individuals who come across as anxiously attached tend to perceive others that way as well (Cook, 2000).

The nature of one's parenting style is impacted by both a biological disposition for caregiving as well as informed by environmental and relational encounters that either facilitate or inhibit this style (Bowlby, 1988). Parenting behaviors known to generate secure attachments are also contingent upon caregivers' awareness and valuation of a child's attachment needs (Bowlby, 1988). This ability to connect is not guaranteed by financial security as variation exists across social classes. Crowell and Feldman (1988) considered the possibility of parents' insecure attachment styles becoming a risk factor for their children as there might be a link between parents' IWMs and having a working model for how to be a parent. Parents' own anxieties and insecure attachment patterns stemming from encounters with their environment and attachment relationships might greatly influence this dynamic (Bowlby, 1973). Crowell and Feldman found that children's behavior was related to their mother's attachment style even when the mother's behavior was controlled (Crowell & Feldman, 1988). Children's behavior was best when their mother's attachment style was secure.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) discussed how the Adult Attachment Inventory (AAI; Main & Goldwyn, 1994) produced evidence for the generational nature of attachment; wherein attachment style influences one's parenting style, which in turn influences the attachment style of one's kids. As expected, it was found parental attachment influences and is fairly consistent with peer attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). For example, those with negative views of others might display avoidance of social interactions at home and away; this avoidance might pre-empt one's ability to modify IWMs of others. While not guaranteed, Bowlby (1988) pointed to the increased likelihood of the intergenerational transmission of unresponsive parenting

behaviors and insecure attachment styles or, conversely, responsive attunement and secure attachment.

Positive marital relationships have also been found to be predictive of secure attachment in infants and young children. Thus, Coyl, Newland, and Freeman (2010) examined the intersection of parents' intergenerational and partner-based IWMs and use of social support on their child's attachment security while using specific parental strategies as mediating variables. Results suggested consistent parenting and co-parenting (i.e., broken down in terms of supportiveness and intrusiveness), parent-child involvement, and non-physical discipline strategies partially mediated the impact of parents' IWMs and use of social support on their child's attachment security (Coyl et al., 2010). As such, Coyl et al. suggested it would be useful to examine how parenting behaviors remain consistent or change as children grow older and what specific behaviors are effective in fostering attachment security across childhood and into adolescence.

Insecure Attachment Development

The likelihood of developing insecure attachment patterns increases from prolonged periods of separation or parental unresponsiveness or through adverse contact (e.g., physical or sexual abuse). According to attachment theory, fear of or actual loss (even temporarily) of one's attachment bonds is said to be very anxiety provoking (Gillath et al., 2009). Bowlby (1977) believed anxiety had survival value since it was a healthy reaction to the perceived threat of caregiver abandonment or unmet biological needs. When a young infant's caregivers are absent or inconsistent in responding during those moments of anxiety, the seeds of insecure attachment bonds are planted (Bowlby,

1973, 1980). Over time, the young child might come to view him/herself as unworthy of having his/her needs met by esteemed others.

Conditions of attachment threat (e.g., frightening, painful, or unexpected shifts) are more likely to evoke attachment behavior although this is mediated by the historical availability of one's caregivers (Bowlby, 1988). It should be noted that threat does not necessarily involve an actual danger but might simply entail a signal regarding increased levels of risk. Threats of loss or abandonment in particular are likely to evoke reactions of fear or angry protest (Bowlby, 1980). As demonstrated with the secure base script (Mikulincer, Shaver, Sapir-Lavid, & Avihou-Kanza, 2009), individuals might elect to increase/hyperactivate or decrease/deactivate their attachment behavior strategies in the face of threat signals depending on the nature of one's attachment figure availability, level of attachment security, and potential for proximity seeking. Individuals with preoccupied attachment styles might amplify their efforts (i.e., hyperactivation) to earn the attention and affection they need while simultaneously worrying that rejection might be just around the corner. Alternatively, the same child might become increasingly self-reliant (i.e., deactivation) in the face of repeated let-downs (Mikulincer et al., 2009). Rather than risk rejection, these avoidant individuals attenuate their needs.

As Bowlby (1988) noted, insecure attachment patterns can emerge in the face of repeated literal or threatened separations and abandonment. In many cases, such emotional and relational traumas might supersede the impact of physical abuse on the development of relational schemas, although potential ripple effects should not be overlooked (Bowlby, 1973). Those who go on to develop avoidant attachment patterns often experience caregivers who scoff at, ignore, or spurn their early attempts for comfort

and support, whereas those who are more anxiously attached might have experienced inconsistent responding, thwarted autonomy development, and inhibited exploratory allowances (Bowlby, 1988). Such encounters lead to experiences of fear and anxiety that might perpetuate over time and cloud one's IWMs, viewing others as untrustworthy or unreliable, and the self as unlovable, unworthy, or un-needing (Bowlby, 1973). These attachment patterns might act as a filter whereby thoughts and feelings are defensively excluded and more holistic information is lost (Bowlby, 1980). As long as "current modes of perceiving and construing situations, and the feelings and actions that ensue therefrom, are determined by emotionally significant events... the personality will be prone to cognition, affect, and behaviour maladapted to the current situation" (Bowlby, 1988, p. 117). When anxious or avoidant patterns of interpersonal perception and relatedness are developed at an early age, one is likely to view future encounters in an anticipatory manner, thereby leading to sustained patterns of insecurity (Bowlby, 1973). Longitudinal data on behavioral correlates of early and sustained insecure attachment patterns have been demonstrated (Bowlby, 1973).

Bowlby (1969, 1973) found that as the child becomes older, experiences or threats of separation are met with reactions of initial protest and anger out of fear or hope. However, these can move into feelings of despair and eventually detachment over time should such separations or lack of attuned care provision recur and extend (Bowlby, 1969, 1973). Over time, one's acts of protest, despair, and detachment might become increasingly maladaptive as it relates to potential future relationships (Bowlby, 1973). Much like a contract that is broken, experiences of loss or threatened (e.g., parental death,

separation or divorce, abandonment) can shatter one's sense of security (Berman et al., 2015; Bowlby, 1980).

While there certainly needs to be room afforded for individual paths of grieving (Bowlby, 1980), adaptive and resilient responding to loss often requires a shift in one's IWMs and corresponding attachment behavior. This includes a processing of feelings of anger and bitterness toward the other person and oneself (Bowlby, 1980). Indeed, grieving is thought to be a healthy process that when repressed or denied can lead to living in falsehood and developing more chronic psychological concerns (Bowlby, 1980). Thus, it is important to consider whether an individual has the emotional and environmental resources to allow the support of a healthy grieving process. This is particularly true in the case of a child left with a similarly bereaved parent or a child who already had maladaptive IWMs that might worsen as a result of perceiving the loss as stemming from one's own shortcoming or unworthiness (Bowlby, 1980). When the grieving process is denied or unsupported, inter-parental conflict is sustained post-divorce or separation; subsequent changes take place in one's home (e.g., change of family rules and roles, challenges of blended families) and avoidant attachment patterns and more compulsive self-reliance might pervade. Such patterns might lead to oppressive feelings of guilt and mental health concerns down the line (Bowlby, 1980; Hayashi & Strickland, 1998). With children in particular, grief can frequently be masked by aggressive and angry behavioral outbursts (Bowlby, 1980).

Grief becomes maladaptive following loss (e.g., death of a spouse, child, parent, other attachment figure) when one is unable to maintain attachments with others following the loss, whereby patterns of organization in life are lost (Bowlby, 1988). It

can also be detrimental if a reversal of the parent-child role occurs, especially following a loss. The phenomenon of parentification can have a myriad of detrimental effects on the developing individual (Bowlby, 1980; Hooper, 2007) such as difficulty forming relationships, struggles in separating from one's family of origin, problems with participating in age appropriate behaviors, trouble engaging in academic pursuits, and hindrances to developing self-esteem. It is important to distinguish between emotional and instrumental parentification; the former is damaging while the latter, though damaging in the long-run, could lead to feelings of accomplishment and contribution (Hooper, 2007). Hooper (2007) theorized IWMs could help determine which divergent outcome family dynamics of parentification could have on one's development. Bowlby (1980) also noted these losses and subsequent failure to grieve adequately could have a cumulative effect. Although Bonanno (2004) noted the majority of individuals respond to death and loss with patterns of resiliency, this does not mean one will always return to baseline functioning (Bowlby, 1980).

Attachment into Adulthood

“Attachments to other human beings are the hub around which a person's life revolves.... From these intimate attachments a person draws his strength and enjoyment of life and, through what he contributes, he gives strength and enjoyment to others” (Bowlby, 1980, p. 442). Bowlby (1988) found the IWMs and personality structures that evolved in relation to one's caregivers and family during childhood increasingly become impacted by the wider social environment as one progresses toward adulthood. As Bowlby (1988) noted, adverse relational experiences such as rejection, abandonment, and abuse during one's formative years might inhibit future connections into adulthood for

fear of further rejection. Secure relational patterns might facilitate adjustment later in life (Bowlby, 1988).

Peer and romantic relationships might serve the role as subsidiary attachment figures though become more primary over time (Bowlby, 1969). As Bowlby (1969) noted, “Continuation of attachment behavior in childhood is shown by the circumstances that lead an adult’s attachment behaviour to become more readily elicited” (p. 208). For many, adolescence is a particularly tumultuous developmental period filled with much ambivalence about relationships and themselves. In a recent review of the attachment literature, Shaver and Mikulincer (2010) found that adolescent studies, at least as measured with the Adult Attachment Inventory (AAI), were more dismissing than other age groups. Relatedly, as one’s attachment security increases, the frequency of attachment needs tends to become more diffuse (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Bowlby, 1969, 1977). Over time, secure attachment increasingly allows for more symbolic communications such as letters and phones calls to suffice in meeting one’s needs (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

One of the first attachment studies that looked at both an adolescent population and several mediating variables was conducted by Cooper, Shaver, and Collins (1998). They found anxious-avoidant adolescents tended to score significantly higher on psychological symptomatology and risky behavior scales while scoring lower on self-concept scales when compared with their secure and avoidant counterparts. Securely attached individuals tended to have the best adjustment across all the instruments (Cooper et al., 1998). As predicted, the avoidant individuals tended to have the least risky behaviors as mediated by their predicted lack of social contact and social competence.

Clearly, correlates such as risky behavior and self-concept could play an impactful role on one's separation-individuation from their family of origin and their successful adjustment to adulthood.

As other studies of parent-child interactions have noted, Kenny and Sirin (2006) found that quality of interactions trumped quantity for emerging adults. They found stronger parental attachment was associated with positive self-worth, depressive symptoms below the cut-off score, and positively related to mothers' reports of attachment (Kenny & Sirin, 2006). One's attachment style to his/her caregivers was still a major predictor of psychological well-being in emerging adulthood (Caron et al., 2012), though experiences of peer and romantic anxiety contributed the largest proportion of variance. This age bracket (i.e., 18-24) might be of particular interest as Wenzel et al. (2012) noted little research has been conducted with emerging adults who are homeless despite the increased risk of homelessness upon entering into adulthood.

In their examination of adult romantic attachment styles, Hazan and Shaver (1987) were the first to truly expand Bowlby's (1967, 1973, 1980) work on attachment theory to examine it more thoroughly in adulthood. With their measure of adult romantic attachment, Hazan and Shaver found the prevalence of secure to insecure-type attachment patterns (i.e., secure--56%, avoidant--24%, and anxious-ambivalent--20% three-factor structure based on continuum of anxiety and avoidance; Fraley & Shaver, 2000) was fairly comparable to those found in childhood. Those attachment patterns also related meaningfully to IWMs in adulthood and the felt experience of romantic partnerships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Securely attached individuals prized the happy, friendly, and trusting nature of their romantic relationships while more insecurely attached individuals

tended to fixate on aspects of intimacy they feared or were anxious about such as emotional roller coasters and feelings of jealousy (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Bowlby (1988) discussed how maladaptive patterns of adult romantic attachment might emerge when a partner's respective anxious attachments lead to the adoption of at times violent or otherwise harmful behaviors geared toward keeping his/her partner accessible and within his/her control. Conversely, more secure attachment patterns might lead to a sense of mutual trust and the ability to provide support reciprocally.

Secure romantic attachment individuals were found to have better outcomes with work, anxiously attached individuals allowed their relationships to impact work, and avoidant individuals allowed work to impact relational involvement (Lyddon, Bradford, & Nelson, 1993). Haydon, Collins, Salvatore, Simpson, & Roisman (2012) noted that general attachment representations derived from infant attachment security and cumulative childhood experiences and adult romantic attachment patterns might or might not coincide. Evidence exists for their connection through potential moderation of other constructs such as emotional regulation and one's approach to conflict resolution (Haydon et al., 2012). Additionally, individuals might use adult relationships as a means of promoting feelings of security and confidence in exploring the world, relationships, career, or other developmental tasks of adulthood (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). They found romantic attachment patterns might have a joint effect between familial and extra-familial relationships such that both contribute to current relational functioning. In particular, they observed general attachment patterns might override current relational patterns in situations of distress or attachment threat (Fraley & Shaver, 2000).

Susan Johnson (2007, 2008) and Leslie Greenberg (Greenberg & Goldman, 2008) have worked to refine the understanding of adult attachment patterns as it relates to the emotionally focused needs of couples. Underlying their approach to emotion-focused couples therapy, this theory assumes all people are motivated to find and maintain close connections with a partner and thereby hold safe emotional connections (Johnson, 2007). Motivations to maintain a stable relationship manifest as attachment behaviors wherein partners might use each other in a similar manner to their secure base relationship in childhood. When needs are not met or when feelings of attachment threat are evoked (Bowlby, 1988; Johnson, 2008), individuals may still follow the similar patterns of protest, despair, and detachment they might have used in childhood. Couples in distress are often caught in a cycle where unmet emotional needs (e.g., emotional accessibility and responsiveness) are sought after in ways that promote distress in the other (Johnson, 2007). This could result in a self-perpetuating system where safety and security are unstable (Johnson, 2007). Often, individuals are unclear about both their own emotional processes as well as their partners (Greenberg & Goldman, 2008). Having reviewed some of the basic tenets of adult attachment relationships and other tenets of attachment throughout the lifespan, it is also important to consider how such dynamics might impact one's narrative recall of his/her past relationships.

Cassidy, Lichtenstein-Phelps, Sibrava, Thomas, and Borkovec (2009) found that regardless of childhood events, adults appeared more highly functional if their current state of mind was secure. Furthering the notion of adults' current state of mind, Hinnen, Sanderman, and Sprangers (2009) set out to investigate the mediating role of adult attachment on childhood events with respect to current life satisfaction. In general, more

recollections about openness and harmony were associated with less attachment anxiety and avoidance (Bowlby, 1988; Crowell & Owens, 1996; Main & Goldwyn, 1994).

Parental support recollections were related to less avoidance while parental rejection recollections were associated with more anxiety (Hinnen et al., 2009). The relationship between childhood recollections and adult life satisfaction was partly mediated by adult attachment, whereas parental rejection and life satisfaction were completely mediated by adult attachment (Hinnen et al., 2009). McCabe and Peterson (2011-2012) found elaboration on narratives was less likely among males, those with avoidant attachment styles, and more recent negative memories, while a few researchers observed similar recollections among individuals who were homeless (Rodell et al., 2003; Tavecchio et al., 1999).

It is noteworthy that individuals with different attachment styles might differ in terms of the cognitive accessibility of their attachment-related experiences (Hinnen et al., 2009), wherein securely attached individuals might have better recall of attachment-related childhood events. One's current state of mind might also be impacted by the relationships they have with significant others. Clulow (2007) drew attention to the important role partnerships can play in the development of social and emotional intelligence throughout adulthood. Partnerships often mediate one's external and internal worlds; the success of this mediation could have a systemic impact. Current relationships can play a protective role as they are associated with less attachment avoidance and anxiety and greater life satisfaction (Hinnen et al., 2009).

This section provided an overview of attachment theory, how it was expanded to look at attachment relationships beyond the mother-child dyad, and how it was developed

beyond mere extrapolations from postulates of it being a lifespan theory (Bowlby, 1969). Attachment theory was reviewed with regard to its specific exploration in adolescence (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), into adult romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), and specifically how principles of attachment, emotional regulation, as well as caregiving have been applied theoretically and therapeutically (Johnson, 2008). The myriad tenets of attachment theory have been applied to a variety of niche relationships. This broad lifespan overview was provided as any numbers of attachment-related avenues emerged within participants' narratives. Points of emphasis would be that attachment relationships could serve as a risk or protective factor, one's IWMs and attachment style are worthwhile to consider across the lifespan as they are context and relationally-specific, and they are fairly stable though not unalterable. I now discuss the limited explicit application of attachment theory to homelessness.

Homelessness and Attachment

The consideration of secure base behavior (Bowlby, 1988; Johnson, 2007) might be relevant for adults who are currently homeless as active experiences of attachment threat from negative interpersonal and environmental encounters might inhibit one's ability to navigate resources and needed services. Since the primary aim of this study was to highlight strengths, humanity, and dispel myths enroute to discovering possible inroads for prevention and intervention with homelessness, it is important to consider both trait and state-based aspects of attachment styles among those who are homeless. This is particularly true for those dynamics found to allow for more adaptive situational responding. Even those who have more securely attached styles might show state-based fluctuations (Bowlby, 1969; Gillath et al., 2009) from day to day and across situations

and relationships. Bowlby (1973) observed that fatigue, illness, and stressful situations could all elicit seemingly maladaptive attachment behaviors, which when considering the distress experienced by many who are working toward finding stability and housing becomes highly relevant. To date, only a limited number of articles have explicitly drawn on an attachment model with homelessness, though some exceptions do exist (Taylor-Seehafer et al., 2007). However, the focus has been limited with adults and homelessness chronicity origins with most focusing on social network and adverse childhood experiences.

Maladaptive Impact of Insecure Attachment

The experiences of adverse childhood experiences can be particularly troubling when stemming from one's primary attachment figures as one is placed in a confusing bind of being drawn toward and needing to separate from the same figure (Bowlby, 1973). Such scenarios might lead to splitting tendencies (Cashdan, 1988) thought to underlie many pathologies. These splitting tendencies might also impact paths toward homelessness as it is difficult to view one's caregivers unfavorably or have one's perspective validated in such environments. Rodell et al. (2003) found length of time, intensity of one's substance abuse, and elements of attachment theory were relevant for predicting suicidal thoughts among veterans who were homeless. Adverse childhood experiences, sexual abuse in particular, have been found to be associated with later substance use and suicidal ideation with possible mediation stemming from lowered self-esteem and self-efficacy (Rodell et al., 2003). Secure caregiver attachment, marriage, and steady employment were all found to have the opposite effect. Rodell et al. observed, "Insecure caregiver attachment and sexual abuse are thought to be early primal

experiences that lead to adverse feelings toward oneself and others, limited development of personal attributes and coping skills, stress, and interpersonal difficulties” (p. 59).

Many of the prior studies connecting attachment recollections with homelessness relied on self-report measures. These often failed to capture the nuances necessary for a more holistic understanding of an individual’s experience of being homeless (Taylor-Seehafer, Jacobvitz, & Steiker, 2008). In a narrative case study pilot (Roche, 2012), I found nearly all participants recalled abusive attachment experiences that ranged from neglect to verbal harassment to physical and sexual abuse. In their study of homeless adolescents, Taylor-Seehafer et al. (2008) found percentages as high as “70% reporting physical abuse, and 55% reporting sexual abuse... Not *one* of the participants [58] satisfied requirements for a secure attachment pattern” (p. 585). These insecure attachment patterns, prior experiences of trauma, and low social connection were associated with increased substance use. Taylor-Seehafer et al. also noted that 22% of the sample indicated the presence of social connection as a protective factor.

Tavecchio et al. (1999) stated, “Lack of parental responsiveness and emotional support are significant factors in the genesis of homelessness” (p. 247). Indeed, one of the thematic findings from a pilot study (Roche, 2012) was participants might have had financial support but felt they were lacking parental warmth while growing up. The adverse impact of childhood experiences might not always extend from such intentional behavior as loss and attachment figure separation can have sustained effects as well (Bowlby, 1980). Tavecchio et al. also noted one risk factor for adolescent homelessness was growing up in a divorced family. Bowlby (1980) theorized experiences of separation and loss could be particularly damaging to one’s psyche when they lacked the necessary

support following the relational rupture. While one has to certainly be careful about making any sorts of casual claims, especially surrounding such a sensitive area, it is noteworthy that many participants in my pilot study also reported similar familial disruptions (Roche, 2012).

Numerous studies have examined the potentially adverse effects of having an insecure attachment throughout the lifespan. For example, Nyamathi et al. (2012) found that while health perception and recent drug use were predictive of increased depressive symptomology, so too were coping strategies commonly found among those with insecure attachment styles (i.e., self-destructive escape, avoidance and emotional stifling, and passive interpersonal strategies). Meanwhile, Cassidy et al. (2009) examined the role of childhood attachment experiences and risk factors in the development of adult psychopathology, specifically generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). Compared with a control group, GAD patients reported experiencing more childhood rejection and neglect, role-reversal and enmeshment, and less love. While the authors (Cassidy et al., 2009) were not certain as to whether such risk factors impacted individuals in an additive or synergistic manner, they basically found insecure attachment reduced one's ability to cope with additional stressors. Depression has been correlated with personality styles that reflect interpersonal dependency and insecure, especially preoccupied attachment (Armsden, McCauley, Greenberg, Burke, & Mitchell, 1990; Davila, 2001). In a post-hoc analysis, Hiester, Nordstrom, and Swenson (2009) revealed those who experienced a decrease in attachment security had significantly lower levels of perceived self-worth and competence, significantly higher scores on anxiety, phobia, and depression, and significantly lower academic and personal-emotional adjustment to college. Thus,

understanding some of the relational and attachment-related changes might bring better insight into factors affecting the health of individuals who are homeless.

Facilitative Role of Secure Attachment

Within the attachment relationship with caregivers, more secure and functional patterns of relating to the world are built upon mutual trust and approval as well as consistency in one's upbringing (Bowlby, 1973). Indeed, the presence of caring and supportive attachment figures (e.g., parent, mentor, sibling) presently and while growing up has been consistently found to serve as a protective factor (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). For instance, among those who were homeless and had a mental illness, increased periods of stable housing were predicted by satisfactory family relations, increased phone contact, and increased affiliation with caregivers and family members with whom one felt close (Pickett-Schenk, Cook, Grey, & Butler, 2007). Early and sustained secure patterns of relating could not only provide possible emotional and material support but they could also lead to improved coping capacities such as emotional regulation (Bowlby, 1969, 1973).

When available and adaptive, social support has been found to moderate the relationship between symptoms and the adverse coping styles of insecurely attached individuals by reducing stress levels and lowering overall levels of depressive symptoms (Nyamathi et al., 2012). Unlike the common perception of those who are homeless, evidence is generally in favor of the existence of social support and connection for those who are homeless across age ranges. Once again, quality trumps quantity as the perceived level of social support can mitigate the impact of stress and psychological symptoms (Bates & Toro, 1999; Toro, Tulloch, & Ouellette, 2008).

Social networks among those who are homeless can often have both adaptive and maladaptive components--a metaphoric double-edged sword. For example, Wenzel et al. (2012) found substance use and unsafe sex behaviors were elevated among social networks developed while homeless. Connections to relatives and romantic/sexual partners were found to be a source of emotional support, although partners could increase risk of engaging in unsafe sex and substance use. Therefore, it is important to understand both sides so as to parcel out protective from risk factors. An emerging area of interest relates to the utility of online communities and social supports for those who are homeless. It has been shown that for many individuals who are homeless, internet and social networking usage might be fairly comparable to their housed counterparts (Eyrich-Garg, 2011; Guadagno, Muscanell, & Pollio, 2013; Rice, Kurzban, & Ray, 2012).

Yet one must consider the broader context and community when it comes to understanding the influence and dynamics of social networks (Wenzel et al., 2012). Rayburn and Corzine (2010), in a refreshingly strengths-based manner that contrasted with other studies that focused on sexual abuse, sexually transmitted infections, HIV, or implied that those who were homeless should be single and chaste, explored positive aspects of romantic attachments. This area is an important consideration, especially since there was some evidence that those married or partnered were more successful following through with shelters' treatment programs (Rayburn & Corzine, 2010). Rayburn and Corzine found that unlike the general population, gender differences regarding one's approach to romantic relationships were non-existent. All valued relationships were supportive and emotionally soothing, albeit complex and difficult in the present circumstances.

As Reitzes, Crimmins, Yarbrough, and Parker (2011) found, many of those who are homeless might attempt to patchwork their social networks (e.g., kin, non-kin, formal supports, and associates). It is in this manner that they have myriad pragmatic, attachment, sexual, and emotionally-relevant needs met while trying to derive or maintain a sense of community (Reitzes et al., 2011). Stablein (2011) also found generating and maintaining ties with peers was a means of combatting the negative aspects of their experience and environment. Such ties increased access to resources (e.g., social capital), combatted one's sense of loneliness and marginalization, and leveraged sources of emotional support (Stablein, 2011). At the same time, this might put one at further risk for broader social exclusion and, at times, dangerous situations.

Before going over connections with attachment and homelessness literature, in the next section, I review resiliency in reference to the positive psychology movement (Seligman, 1999; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). I also go over how the concept of resiliency has evolved over time to a more contemporary understanding of it as a process influenced by protective and risk factors (Bonanno, 2004; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002).

Resiliency

Former APA President Martin Seligman (1999) brought renewed energy to the field of counseling psychology and the need to give a more concerted effort to focus on human strengths for the purposes of prevention as well as optimal functioning and relatedness. Truthfully, the goal was to have a better understanding of the whole continuum of human experience (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Contrary to the prevailing medical model's deficits-focused approach, the burgeoning field of

positive psychology focuses on such traits as “optimism, courage, work ethic, future-mindedness, interpersonal skill, the capacity for pleasure and insight, and social responsibility” (Seligman, 1999, p. 559). Although the list of potential strengths and positive attributes is likely innumerable, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) stated the purpose was to discover which individual, familial, communal, and societal factors allowed for mutual flourishing as well as observed that one must adopt a life span or longitudinal focus for understanding positive psychology principles. When done retrospectively, one might consider how themes related to “well-being, contentment, and satisfaction (in the past); hope and optimism (for the future); and flow and happiness (in the present)” emerged (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5).

Resiliency theory, much like the broader field of positive psychology, was originally limited due to an overemphasis on sets of individual traits or characteristics as opposed to more earnestly viewing resiliency and strengths in a more dynamic, mosaic, and systemic manner (Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Higgitt, & Target, 1994). Rutter (1990) ultimately provided clarification to the theory by expanding beyond an individual trait attributional model. Resiliency has since been thought to reflect a process that involves a complex social system at the individual, familial, cultural, and communal levels over a particular period of time (Brown, Kallivayalil, Mendelsohn, & Harvey, 2012; Rutter, 1990). Thus, in the face of adversity, a complex web of protective and risk factors might be drawn from or impinge upon the individual trying to adapt positively to his/her circumstances (Brown et al., 2012; Herrman et al., 2011). Although individuals are likely to experience some degree of setback or symptoms of distress from trying events, the

process of responding resiliently allows one to ameliorate its impact and try to return to homeostatic levels of functioning (Bonanno, 2004).

In a comprehensive review of resiliency literature, Herrman et al. (2011) pointed to the need to build a strong, trusting relationship while gathering a good history across the lifespan as points of prevention and intervention can occur at any point to reduce or ameliorate the impact of stressors. In resiliency theory, the focus was originally on short-term, impactful traumas. Contemporary thinking has expanded it to more sustained, insidious traumas and stressors including poverty, deficient parenting, and homelessness (Herrman et al., 2011). As Brown et al. (2012) found, resiliency relates to the cumulative risk and protective factors that are intertwined within one's ecological framework as well as a "dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (p. 103). Yet even in the face of adverse childhood experiences, prolonged poverty, and other negative encounters, the extreme variability in responses points to the role of resiliency and, relatedly, attachment dynamics (Herrman et al., 2011). For most adverse circumstances, Bonanno (2004) found resilient responding was more often than not the likely pathway. In truth, resiliency was more common than originally thought (Bonanno, 2004; Masten, 2001). For example, the majority of the United States' population experience at least one traumatic event in their lifetime; yet only 5%-10% go on to develop PTSD. Unlike prior attributional models of inherent trait resiliency, resiliency is not just possible for rare individuals with exceptional capabilities. Rather, it is inherently ordinary (Masten, 2001). This ordinary process could be a healthy adjustment to interpersonal loss (Bonanno, 2004).

It is important to remember that resilience does not equal the same pathway as recovery; instead, it involves the ability to maintain a stable equilibrium in the face of traumatic events or setbacks (Bonanno, 2004). Thus, one is not entirely unflappable and resilient responding does not entail the absence of any negative outcomes. As there are multiple and sometimes unexpected pathways to resilience, one might find they cope and draw on resources in ways that were adaptive within prior circumstances and relationships wherein such methods might not be adaptive later on (Bonanno, 2004; Teyber & McClure, 2011). Brown et al. (2012) referred to this as the braiding process, such that formerly adaptive means of responding with resilience are less effective in the present. A compulsive overreliance on certain strategies in an inflexible manner might be construed as reflecting an area of concern; after all, one must be able to see resilience in pathology and pathology in the resilience (Brown et al., 2012).

Masten (2007) reflected on the waves of research in resiliency literature: the first wave focused on individual, familial, and communal factors; the second wave focused on underlying, common, or overlapping, processes such as attachment theory; the third wave paid particular attention to matters of prevention and intervention; and the fourth and most contemporary wave focused on neuropsychological underpinnings that play a factor in adapting to stresses and adversities. The fourth wave was unique; concepts such as neural-plasticity (Bryck & Fisher, 2012) as it related to structural changes in neural networks as a result of learning to respond resiliently in the face of new adversity and the presence of different protective factors could be better understood (Masten, 2007). This narrative inquiry found itself at the intersection of the first three waves in the resiliency literature. I explored protective factors systemically with attention paid to the underlying

process of attachment dynamics while simultaneously focusing on understanding how these processes unfolded across the life span so as to gain insight regarding intervention and prevention (Masten, 2001).

Patterns of resilient responding have been found to generally be the more common pathway individuals navigate even when individuals have grown up in disadvantaged conditions (Masten, 2001). It is important to reiterate that resilience is not a trait; rather, it can be developed. Since many factors impact the ability of children, adults, and families to respond with resiliency (e.g., biological, personal, familial, communal, educational environmental, cultural, and structural factors), there are plenty of inroads for fostering resilient, protective factors (Herrman et al., 2011). As protective and risk factors might interact in very complex ways within and across contexts, one must bear in mind that someone who does not respond in a resilient manner does not warrant reactions of blaming or shaming. A kid who does not exhibit “resilience” might be blamed for not doing better. Thus, one must consider both risk and protective factors when looking at exposure to adversity and the presence (or lack thereof) of positive adjustment (Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005). Indeed, a risk of the resiliency literature is an overemphasis on the individual to the neglect of larger systemic factors impeding growth, development, and healthy adaptation. As Davis (2014) poignantly opined,

Why must so many poor people and individuals of color be so skilled, so talented, so adaptive, or—as in the case mentioned earlier—so hard headed? Our efforts to promote strength and resiliency models seem to have blurred our vision and taken our eyes off of the big picture, which is to reduce suffering by promoting greater social justice and societal equity. (p. 5)

Pro-Resiliency Protective Factors

In many ways, it is theoretically inconsistent to focus on resiliency traits; responding to adversity with resilient patterns is often multidimensional, interactive, situation-specific, and has an element of equifinality (McNulty & Fincham, 2012). That being said, various authors (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998) tried to parcel out which traits, tendencies, relationships, and factors tended to be more commonly linked with successful adaptation in the face of adversity as well as those who acted in a preventative manner by developing one's level of competency for task and relational performance in a variety of domains. Brown et al. (2012) and Herrman et al. (2011) pointed to various personal factors including openness, agreeableness, having an internal locus of control, positive cognitive appraisal, ability to integrate experiences of adversity into a coherent narrative, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, optimism, higher intellectual functioning, tolerance of ambiguity, active coping, emotional regulation, secure attachment, and the list goes on. Herrman et al. noted some personal factors might be developmentally specific in terms of their utility.

Bonanno (2004) referred to a broad cluster of personal characteristics that facilitate one's ability to manage despite trauma: hardiness, self-enhancement, repressive coping, and positive affect. Hardiness alludes to a series of traits wherein one has a meaningful purpose orientation, a belief in his/her ability to influence outcomes and the environment, and a belief that growth can occur from the experience of trials and tribulations (Bonanno, 2004). Meanwhile, self-enhancement acts as a buffer in times of stress, whereas repressive coping allows for one to cope in the short-term with extreme circumstances by blocking out or distracting away from emotions (Bonanno, 2004). On

the other hand, positive emotion and laughter involve the heightening of positive affect to contact and maintain connection with positive social ties. When considering pro-resiliency traits, one must look to further understanding by expanding the lens of resiliency beyond the individual. Albeit some of the personal factors are relevant when it comes to putting oneself in healthier contexts that allow for wider access to diverse protective factors such as mentors (Dang & Miller, 2013) and areas of competency.

Biological factors are highly relevant as they relate to the interaction of the individual with the environment. Early stressors can impact neural networks and regulatory capacities (Charney, 2004; Edidin et al., 2011; Perry & Szalavitz, 2006; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Less stressful early environments in particular can allow for the healthy development of hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis and oxytocin pathways known to further regulate stress and anxiety levels, thereby enabling more trusting, prosocial interactions (Herrman et al., 2011). Within the family system, “a supportive spouse, financial security, physical attractiveness, high IQ, positive school experiences, strong religious affiliations, a sense of efficacy in the parenting role and a sense of optimism about the child” are some of the traits thought to interact positively as one continues to adapt to parenthood (Fonagy et al., 1994, p. 234). Such traits might also allow greater chances for secure parent-child interactions. Multiple sources of social support, secure patterns of attachment to at least one caregiver, reception of authoritative parenting behaviors, stable though developmentally appropriate patterns of family relations, and lack of caregiver mental health concerns are thought to better allow for resilient responding (Herrman et al., 2011). In the broader community, positive ties to extended family members, peers, teachers, mentors, good schools, cultural organizations,

and safe neighborhoods are thought to build on resiliency (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002).

Next I cover the growing body of literature surrounding resiliency and homelessness. This was done for the purposes of demonstrating the relevancy of the construct of resiliency within the population of those who are homeless, minding how levels of resilient responding could change over the life course in the face of new challenges and with varying degrees of protective factors.

Homelessness and Resiliency

Archbishop Anthony Bloom stated, “People are much greater and much stronger than we imagine, and when unexpected tragedy comes...we see them so often grow.... We must remember that people are capable of greatness, of courage, but not in isolation” (cited in Bowlby, 1973, p. 322). As Boydell et al. (2000) asserted, there should be intent in intervention to “focus on the strengths of marginalized people” (p. 36). Similar sentiments have been echoed elsewhere (APA, 2009; Sumerlin & Bundrick, 1997). The APA articulated an urgent need to consider the strengths and resilient processes of individuals who are homeless so significant individual, familial, and communal protective factors can be drawn from for prevention and intervention purposes.

According to Seery, Leo, Lupien, Kondrak, and Almonte (2013), surviving childhood adversity can have a curvilinear relationship with resilient responding to present adversity in adulthood. Those who were able to overcome a certain degree of adversity in childhood tended to fare better when presented with different types of adversity later on in life than those who were relatively sheltered and protected (Seery et al., 2013). The relationship is curvilinear because excessive levels of adversity might

overwhelm this potential. This finding was highly relevant to the present study as it not only observed the potential for strength in the face of adversity but it also pointed to the need to understand degrees of risk, the role of protective factors, key turning points, and how much was too much adversity (Seery et al., 2013).

Some authors have begun to consider the role of resiliency across the lifespan, especially in response to early adverse experiences. Provided children who grew up in care are overrepresented in marginalized institutions such as homeless shelters, Guest (2012) sought to explore elements of resiliency within such individuals' narratives. Guest argued that focusing solely on elements of helping versus hindering, key moments, or positive/negative valence attributions was overly simplistic. Thus, multiple-method, multi-theoretical approaches could better capture resilience processes over time as was adopted in this inquiry.

In another study, McGloin and Widom (2001) retrospectively examined the impact of child abuse and neglect on one's ability to function adaptively across a variety of domains (i.e., employment, housing status, education, social functioning, mental health concerns, and criminal behaviors). They found 22% of the sample met their established criteria of meeting the majority (i.e., 75%) of successful domain adaptations (McGloin & Widom, 2001). Given the stringent nature of McGloin and Widom's success criterion, it is likely others might find differing levels of resiliency should the study be replicated. Regardless, even if only 22% of those who survived adverse childhood experiences managed to respond resiliently into adulthood, their narratives would be worthwhile to examine.

Lynch, Keasler, Reaves, Channer, and Bukowski (2007) gathered narratives from survivors of adverse childhood experiences. When participants were afforded the space to voice their story, themes of resiliency emerged. In particular (Lynch et al., 2007), these individuals made a great commitment toward taking care of and valuing themselves, relied on supportive relationships (e.g., mentorships with teachers, supervisors, and therapists), developed more optimistic outlooks toward the future, and came to recognize their respective traumas had impacted but not defined them. In general, those who coped adaptively with adverse experiences appeared to draw from multiple and varied protective factors to make it through difficult times (Lynch et al., 2007). Lynch et al. recommended considering both strengths and struggles over time for a more balanced perspective, a recommendation consistent with this investigation.

Coping, Survival, and Adaptation

Within the diverse homeless population, several authors (Baxter & Hopper, 1981; Dashora, Erdem, & Slesnick, 2011) observed what might appear as maladaptive behaviors to the general public might in fact be adaptive coping behaviors in response to a hostile or adverse environment. For instance, Barker (2013) found that in an effort to compensate for their relative lack of cultural capital and need to maintain a sense of self-worth and dignity, many individuals' behaviors were an understandable reaction to a hostile environment that effectively fueled their marginalization. For many individuals who are homeless, resiliency processes might show up in one's ability to draw from internal and external resources that allow one to survive, develop a more nuanced appreciation for their own strength, and keep pushing forward (Kidd & Davidson, 2007; Sumerlin, 1996).

Despite the eroding effects of sustained stress and life difficulties, Nguyen, Liu, Hernandez, and Stinson (2012) found that for men who are homeless, certain elements were helpful for buffering stress. Namely, they found maintaining a sense of masculinity, taking accountability for one's actions and responsibilities, and self-assured problem solving were of benefit. Additionally, the ability to adopt gender-neutral or androgynous based norms was associated with improved problem solving, decreased stress levels, and an openness to seeking professional help (Nguyen et al., 2012).

Bender, Thompson, McManus, Lantry, and Flynn (2007) worked with emerging adults who were homeless and explored the internal and external resources that allowed for successful adaptation to an at times hostile environment. Overall, they found resilient adaptation was facilitated by the development of myriad street smarts that guided one away from more hostile environments, internal resources of problem-oriented coping skills, intrinsic motivation to improve one's circumstances, and optimistic and hopeful outlooks based on one's mindset and spirituality (Bender et al., 2007). External protective factors came from selectively choosing peer networks for various purposes and negotiating reciprocal relationships with various societal resources. Bender et al. found the selectivity stemmed from uncertainty about others' trustworthiness and the need to be mindful of safety concerns. Impressively, the participants found they were able to combat negative societal stereotypes by taking pride in their ability to survive and adapt to difficult environments (Bender et al., 2007).

Eroding Resiliency

Certain factors, situations, and relationships might come to inhibit or deteriorate one's ability to respond resiliently in the face of adversity. For instance, from an early

age onward when developmental matters are jeopardized such as “brain development and cognition, caregiver-child relationships, regulation of emotion and behavior, and the motivation for learning and engaging in the environment” (Masten, 2001, p. 234), resilience potential might erode. It is noteworthy that attachment dynamics can play a role in all of these developmental factors. With an at-risk adolescent population, McWhirter, Besett-Alesch, Horibata, and Gat (2002) found that low self-esteem and low social coping fit into the models predicting a significant portion of the variance in experiences of intimate and social loneliness (i.e., 37% of the variance in intimate loneliness and 27% of the variance in social loneliness). Low emotional coping predicted a significant portion of the variance in intimate loneliness above and beyond the other predictors (McWhirter et al., 2002). Thus, it would appear low social support, perceived loneliness, poor self-esteem, and emotional regulation difficulties could also contribute to the erosion of resilient responding over time.

Based on clinical field observations, Farrell (2010) found one’s ability to reintegrate into the community following a sustained period of homelessness might be limited over time. This could be due to increased levels of familiarity and comfort that some come to derive from their homeless environment, especially after having spent emotional and physical energy adapting to said environment (Farrell, 2010). In addition, some might have inherent difficulties with readjusting to more structured environments that restrict one’s mobility and freedom in various ways. Farrell recommended that with a strong therapeutic alliance, counselors should be sure to attend to these dynamic tensions to rebuild individuals’ ability to respond resiliently during the reintegration process. As Shier, Jones, and Graham (2011) argued, it is in part the responsibility of

service agencies to discover the unique, contextually specific susceptibilities of those who are homeless, and find ways to better serve their needs.

Unfortunately such arguments do not frequently consider individuals' strengths as a means of overcoming their risk factors. In their exploration of risk factors that inhibited resilient reintegration into the community, Shier et al. (2011) found that women who were homeless were disadvantaged due to both gender and homelessness-based stereotyping (e.g., others assuming they were not likely to follow through on commitments, likely to use drugs, are unreliable, etc.). As such, they were discriminated against with regard to housing, employment, damaged self-esteem, and social service access (Shier et al., 2011). In addition, prioritizing their children's needs and coping with intimate and interpersonal experiences of violence served to inhibit resiliency potential (Shier et al., 2011).

Fortunately, with the call for increased focus on resiliency in studies involving those who are homeless (APA, 2009), some have begun to adopt a more balanced susceptibility/resiliency perspective. In an investigation that examined the intersection of resiliency and susceptibility among adolescents who were homeless, Cleverly and Kidd (2011) noted increased risk related to accumulated traumas, family instability, criminal involvement, and mental health decline were contributory factors, especially as time spent homeless increased. They also found in their sample myriad risk factors could overwhelm intrapersonal resiliency variables, although resiliency was measured narrowly and still helped moderate suicidal ideation (Cleverly & Kidd, 2011).

Protective Factors and Strengthening Resiliency

Protective factors are traditionally divided along the lines of individual, familial, and communal sources of support (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002). Among those who are homeless, a number of variables have been found to encourage one's ability to respond to adversity with resiliency. Boydell et al. (2000) commented that the dimension of individual's spirituality was often ignored in homelessness intervention work. Having a strong sense of faith and/or spirituality was commonly quoted among individuals who were homeless as a major factor for surviving and thriving in the face of adversity (Grabbe, Nguy, & Higgins, 2012; Hodge, Moser, & Shafer, 2012; Hurlbut, Robbins, & Hoke, 2011), a finding that also emerged in a prior pilot study (Roche, 2012).

Self-efficacy or the general and circumstance-specific belief that one's actions are viable for causing desired changes in outcome (Bandura, 1997) has also been found to be an important area of intervention for promoting resiliency with one's homelessness. For instance, Epel, Bandura, and Zimbardo (1999) observed the role of high self-efficacy and having a future time orientation in gaining reemployment, spending one's time more productively, proactively searching for housing, and minimizing feelings of depression. While having a present time orientation was associated with securing more temporary and transitional forms of housing, Epel et al. indicated it might have come at the cost of long-term stability and recurrent or episodic periods of homelessness. Sadow and Hopkins (1993) found that at least among veterans who were currently homeless, it could be worthwhile to target self-efficacy and attributions of control in order to enhance resiliency.

Self-esteem has also been found to be play an important mediating or buffering role when it comes to adaptive responding to adverse circumstances such as periods of being homeless (Kidd & Shahar, 2008). Others (Tweed, Biswas-Diener, & Lehman, 2012) argued that it could be fruitful to highlight and heighten the perceived strengths among those who were homeless, finding that “social intelligence, kindness, persistence, authenticity, and humour.... personal skills (e.g., music, sports), jobs skills, intelligence and education” (p. 481) were among those most commonly cited.

Langford, Bowsher, Maloney, and Lissis (1997) noted,

Consequences of social support evident in the literature are personal competence, health maintenance behaviors, especially coping behaviors, perceived control, positive affect, sense of stability, recognition of self-worth, decreased anxiety and depression, and psychological well-being. (p. 95)

Indeed, social support protective factors might serve as a preventative role and help counterbalance individual protective factors that are exasperated or diminished in the aftermath of more acute adversity and trauma (Lightfoot, Stein, Tevendale, & Preston, 2011; Zugazaga, 2008). Along a similar vein, Zlotnick, Tam, and Robertson (2003) found adults who were homeless benefitted from engaging prosocial family, friends, as well as service agency social support when striving to exit from homelessness. This relationship was moderated by current substance abuse challenges and likely other factors that underlay those challenges (Zlotnick et al., 2003).

As a protective factor, social support might entail instrumental or more pragmatic support, the individual's perception regarding felt level or availability of support, and quality of time actually being in contact with one another (Zlotnick et al., 2003).

Ultimately, strategic and substance-free use of social support-oriented protective factors

was likely a vital factor in one's ability to respond resiliently to homeless conditions and avoid chronic homelessness. Zugazaga (2008) compared social support protective factors across homeless single men, women, and women with children, finding similar results across groups. However, single women were found to have lowered level of social support satisfaction and an inverse relationship between number of times homeless and level of social support emerged (Zugazaga, 2008). Interestingly, for single men, social support significantly varied with whether or not they had been physically abused as a child, had lived in foster care, experienced sexual violence in adulthood, or ever abused alcohol (Zugazaga, 2008).

The overlap between resiliency and attachment is now reviewed to demonstrate the benefits of secure attachment styles in the face of adversity while discussing the unique role of positive attachment figures as a protective factor. Attachment security is also considered with regard to the possible enhancement of resiliency.

Resiliency and Attachment

Bowlby (1988) observed that caregiver or attachment figure responses could be directed differentially, such that individuals might take on those that are favorable and disown those that are less so. "It is along these lines that attachment theory explains the differential development of resilient and mentally healthy personalities, and also of personalities prone to anxiety and depression" (Bowlby, 1988, p. 132). Fonagy et al. (1994) made a strong case for positive IWMs and secure attachment patterns to be fundamental processes that underlie or moderate the process of responding with resilience. Ortigo, Westen, DeFife, and Bradley (2013) also found positive IWMs, referred to as patterns of object relations, could help mediate the relationship between

attachment style and traumatic sequelae. Having reviewed many of the characteristics (i.e., proper social behavior, emotional regulatory capacities, persistence in the face of adversity, and intra- and interpersonal resourcefulness) commonly found to help individuals respond resiliently were also consistently preceded by early secure attachment patterns, Fonagy et al. argued that resilient children must be securely attached to somebody. “Even a relatively remote, but stable and responsive figure in the child’s early life can be a protective factor, foster a secure IWM of relationships, and contribute to the child’s resilience to hardship” (Fonagy et al., 1994, p. 240).

More contemporary thinking on attachment theory and its development across time recognized that early attachment experiences did not lead to foregone conclusions regarding one’s attachment style in adulthood. Attachment style, IWMs, interpersonal relationships, and one’s ability to rely on various resiliency factors form a complex web that dynamically interacts over time (Ludolph & Bow, 2012). Such findings reinforced an aim of this study; the dynamic interaction of attachment and resiliency factors over time was of interest.

This aligned with the argument from Atwool (2006)-- attachment and resiliency systems should be considered complementary processes working toward the same outcome with attachment dynamics providing a clearer understanding of how resiliency can unfold over time. Atwool noted, “Attachment theory adds weight to resilience theory by clearly outlining the significance of relationships as the key to all aspects of resilience—culture, community, relationships, and individual,” finding that the “interaction between protective and risk factors highlights internal working models as the underling mechanism mediating this relationship” (p. 327). For instance, factors that

promote more secure attachment might stem from experiences with familial and peer social support experiences. Also, secure attachment in adulthood might allow one to reach out to as opposed to avoid or alienate one's social support. Secure attachment and more positive IWMs might also allow one to develop prosocial developmental competencies such as positive familial and peer relationships, biological regulatory skills, academic success, prosocial habits, and problem solving capacities (Atwool, 2006). Connection to prosocial peers, mentors, and other attachment figures (Atwool, 2006; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998) might allow oneself to more optimally respond to myriad challenges across the lifespan. Similarly, Masten (2007) alluded to the second wave of resiliency theory's development as having examined underlying and unifying constructs that impact one's navigation of the environment; attachment style was mentioned in particular.

Positive Attachment Protective Factors

Since secure attachment styles, positive IWMs, and competent development are intimately connected with one's interactions with important others in their environments (Atwool, 2006; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), it is important to briefly consider positive attachments. When secure attachment patterns exist with at least one caregiver through the display of warmth, appropriate levels of demandingness, behavioral monitoring, and stable, organized, yet developmentally attuned home environments, resilience potential might be fostered (Masten & Reed, 2002; Masten & Shaffer, 2006). Walsh (2003) observed positive and outwardly spoken family belief systems, open and reciprocal forms of communication, and adaptive though clear organization patterns could serve as protective factors. Engagement with prosocial peers is also important for fueling

resiliency in life. Certain environments can foster resiliency by “offering role-modeling and a safe or stable environment to pursue additional skills, like education” (Brown et al., 2012, p. 107). O’Conner and McCartney (2007) found positive ties with caring, invested teachers could help offset the detrimental effects of having less secure patterns of relating with one’s caregivers at home. Both Finley and Calabrese Barton (2003) and Kennedy et al. (2010) noted educational attainment was thought to be one of the most important protective factors for ameliorating early risk factors. While parents, teachers, and possibly peers could all serve as mentors for a given individual, other mentors/caring adults (Laursen & Birmingham, 2003) in the community were also important (e.g., police officers, social service agency staff, counselors, etc.). Keating, Tomishima, Foster, and Alessandri (2002) found relationships with mentor figures could lead to improvements in behaviors as well as lead to positive, prosocial adjustment that could help ameliorate other environmental stressors.

Secure Attachment and Resiliency Enhancement

“Confidence in the unfailing accessibility and support of attachment figures is the bedrock on which stable and self-reliant personality is built” (Bowlby, 1973, p. 322).

Various articles have demonstrated the powerful effects of having a secure attachment when it comes to responding resiliently across the lifespan in the face of adversity including through emotional intelligence, coping strategies, hardiness, adaptive humor, both perceiving as available as well as accessing social support, recovering from trauma, and overall positive mental health and well-being (Besser, Luyten, & Mayes, 2012; Buelow, Lyddon, & Johnson, 2002; Hamarta, Deníz, & Saltali, 2009; Neria et al., 2001; Ognibene & Collins, 1998; Rutten et al., 2013; Svanberg, 1998; Tummala-Narra, Liang,

& Harvey, 2007). As Bowlby summarized, secure attachment has been linked with more positive self-esteem, which in turn is correlated with trusting others, engaging socially, and being held in high regard by others. Thus, with increased levels of secure attachment, one is more likely able to draw from a wider range of both internal and external protective factors. As patterns of secure attachment emerge, individuals might become more effective at emotionally self-regulating; such conjectures have been shown to be accurate (Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003)

Relatedly, the ability to adaptively switch between self and other-reliant forms of coping and regulation across contexts emerges in part from a history of secure attachment. Such attachment and healthy regulatory patterns stem from attuned and responsive social environments across one's development (Bowlby, 1969). Depending upon the quality and consistency of care during infancy and the nature of other important relationships, children are generally thought to be able to respond to temporary caregiver separation more resiliently when they have developed more internalized ideas surrounding object constancy (Bowlby, 1969). Secure attachment brings about a degree of self-reliant resilience as well as the ability to turn to others in times of distress (Bowlby, 1973).

In a more systemically oriented design, Page and Bretherton (2001) sought to find out whether preschoolers attachment themes were predictive of behavior at school with teachers and peers. In general, the most powerful predictor of preschool relations with peers was the enactment of child-mother attachment behavior wherein more secure enactments were correlated with better peer relations (Page & Bretherton, 2001). Child-mother attachment themes predicted pro-social behavior and behavior problems but not

the relationship with the teacher. Paternal authoritative guidance also predicted pro-social behavior with peers (Page & Bretherton, 2001). Interestingly, boys who enacted child-father empathy, child-father attachment, and child-mother empathy more frequently received higher pro-social behavior ratings while the opposite held true for girls with these narrative patterns, perhaps indicative of a stereotypical tomboy effect (Page & Bretherton, 2001).

The findings of Page and Bretherton (2001) were consistent with Salter-Ainsworth and Bowlby's (1989) claim that anger in other social relationships might be an indicator of a child's insecurity of parental availability. The perceived quality of both parent and peer attachments was significantly related to adolescents' psychological wellbeing; albeit, this pattern was more significant for parental attachments. Higher security scores correlated with a greater satisfaction of self, a greater likelihood of seeking social support, and a less symptomatic response to stressful life events (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). When vulnerable and seeking attachment, individuals still need to perceive others as stronger or wiser; friends might increasingly be perceived this way in adolescence (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

The intersection between the three primary constructs of homelessness, attachment, and resiliency, the niche of this investigation, is now explored with reference to attachment style and the nature of resilient responding to change over the lifespan. Finally, I illuminate the relevancy of context as it related to this investigation, though the notion of context was also interwoven throughout.

Homelessness, Attachment, and Resiliency

At the confluence of these three constructs, I was interested in looking at the healthy processing (or coming to terms with) of one's negative attachment history, current and historical positive attachment relationships, and the role of other protective and risk factors of resilient adaptation within homelessness, over time, and across contexts. Throughout all of this, it was important to bear in mind that resiliency and non-pathological responding are the rules and not the exceptions (Bonanno, 2004), even among those who are homeless (APA, 2009; NCH, 2013). Yet, deficit-based research has predominated. For instance, as Bowlby (1988) reviewed, there are caregivers who despite surviving adverse childhood experiences have children who are now securely attached to them. This process appears to be greatly influenced by the presence of positive experiences and protective factors as well as the caregiver's ability to have come to terms with early adverse experiences (Bowlby, 1988). This relates to the conceptualization that "children who have parents who are sensitive and responsive are enabled to develop along a healthy pathway" whereas those who grew up with "insensitive, unresponsive, neglectful, or rejecting parents are likely to develop along a deviant pathway...which renders them vulnerable to breakdown, should they meet with seriously adverse events" such as the process of becoming and experience of homelessness (Bowlby, 1988, p. 136). Bowlby was quick to observe that changes in the direction of either pathway were always possible pending shifts in family and attachment oriented conditions, thus the need to have explored the intersection between attachment and resiliency factors across the lifespan.

In a pilot study (Roche, 2012), participant narratives revealed experiences of attachment threat and loss, a lack of empathic engagement and warmth from caregivers, and myriad forms of abuse to all be risk factors within and leading up to one's homelessness. Conversely, the presence of positive attachment figures across one's lifespan, having others to care for, and a strong sense of spirituality all served as protective factors (Roche, 2012). Bowlby (1988) posited that early and continued patterns of secure attachment were thought to help one respond resiliently to stressful life events. As noted by Bowlby (1969), "Among characteristics of the highly resilient person is resourcefulness in adapting to changing situations, a flexible use of his behavioural repertoire, and an ability to process competing and conflicting information" (p. 363). Certainly such attributes were noteworthy with regard to handling the circumstances surrounding one's state of being homeless.

Masten (2001) noted we are lacking a better understanding of how various protective and risk factors impact one another over time. This might relate to Neiman's (1988) observation regarding conceptual and methodological challenges with studying resiliency, which stemmed partly from the lack of a consistent definition at the time. Neiman suggested resiliency should be viewed as a "spectrum of functioning.... Vulnerability and resilience might be thought of as a wide range of strengths and weaknesses that all children have in relation to specific stressors and situations, at various times in their lives" (p. 24). Internal factors such as a healthy constitution, intelligence, gender as it relates to emotional expression and prosocial role models, temperament as it relates to stress tolerance, and the ability to form reciprocal bonds have been considered. Meanwhile, external protective factors such as caregiver attachment, family bond, and

communal protective factors (e.g., school, physical environment, and potential for play/movement, opportunities to engage in prosocial behavior, and mentor relationships) were of note in investigations of childhood resiliency dynamics (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Neiman, 1988).

To respond with true resiliency, it helps to have successful parental models for coping, the ability to emotionally regulate, secure attachments, and a variety of competencies that allow for performance under duress (Neiman, 1988). Essentially, the bulk of behaviors stemming from resiliently responding children consisted of parallel behaviors to those who operated well from a secure base (Bowlby, 1988). With a secure base, positive, responsive, and appropriately reciprocal relationships with caregivers and important others provide security to explore the world and selective attachment takes place (Bowlby, 1988). Even one positive caregiver relationship or cohesive sibling bond could offset negative encounters with another (Bowlby, 1988). These resiliency factors are difficult to parcel out, which made the argument for longitudinal or lifespan investigations all the more important.

Some authors have begun to challenge the assumption that secure attachment might be necessary let alone preferred for responding resiliently to adverse circumstances. Those with avoidant attachment styles were found to utilize coping strategies that allowed them to respond resiliently in the face of loss (Fraley & Bonanno, 2004; Mancini & Bonanno, 2009). Karreman and Vingerhoets (2012) further explored such dynamics by considering mediating roles of emotional regulation as it related to attachment style and resilient responding. They found that while secure attachment style was generally helpful for higher resiliency levels as well as reflecting on and reappraising

one's emotional reactions, so too were those with dismissing attachment styles (Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012). While acknowledging similar differential emotional regulation pathways based on attachment styles, Caldwell and Shaver (2012) came to an opposite conclusion. Perhaps differences pointed to inconsistencies in measures or the need for more idiographic levels of understanding. Thus, this afforded the space to reconsider the generally held assumption that secure attachment is superior. With individuals who are homeless, this opens the door to consider the role of attachment style, resiliency, and context in a more layered, dynamic manner.

Context

A major limitation of studies related to both attachment style and resiliency is they are decontextualized and made to appear static (i.e., assessed only at a given point in time, failing to recognize them as evolving processes across the lifespan). There is a need to examine the phenomenon of homelessness and individual counter-narratives (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) in context given the contextual influence on resiliency. Bowlby (1973) observed a tendency to blame parents or solely look at an individual's intrapsychic make-up when considering attachment patterns, stressing the importance of considering factors of the broader environment that might serve to protect or inhibit one's development. In general, one could argue for attachment and resiliency theories serving as intersections of individual and structural/community approaches. After all, attachment is influenced by one's individual style, cyclical maladaptive patterns (Levenson, 1995), as well as how others in their environment respond to them (Bowlby, 1969). Likewise, resiliency can be thought to be composed of both individual and

broader, environmental protective factors (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002).

Toro et al. (1991) argued one must consider the social ecological circumstances of homelessness as both individual and structural factors interact dynamically to influence one's well-being differently across contexts. Further, they found that even when environments were similar, such as considering homelessness dynamics across transitional shelters, significant differences ultimately emerged and influenced one's understanding and approach to treatment (Toro et al., 1991). Drawing on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and others, Toro et al. made the case that individual, communal (e.g., demographical composition, available resources, community policies, housing availability), and more macro level factors (e.g., laws, funding sources) must be considered in interactive and chronological manners. Such claims pointed to qualitative approaches as an appropriate means of approaching such matters. While a whole host of biopsychosocial risk factors that interact between the person and the environment have been identified (Nooe & Patterson, 2010), such approaches often bring a deficits-based lens that overlooks how individuals who are homeless and their environments can act in positive ways to overcome adverse circumstances.

Literature Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, I reviewed the primary constructs of interest including homelessness, attachment, resiliency, and the dynamic overlays among them. By providing a historical overview of the shifting demographics and understanding of homelessness, I set the foundation for understanding how stereotyped, prejudicial public perception and policies as well as deficits-based foci in the literature base have emerged.

In light of these trends and the failure to solve the dilemma of homelessness, especially since the recent economic recession in the United States, the APA (2009) put out a call to adopt an explicitly strengths-based resiliency focus for working toward prevention and intervention efforts. Such approaches are also reflective of the growing recognition that despite the inherent risk that can come with impoverished and homeless states, many individuals respond to the adversity of homelessness with adaptive tenacity and courage that allows them to reintegrate into the broader community. After all, the prevalence rates indicate that among those who are homeless, the majority do not become chronically homeless, struggle from more severe forms of mental illness, or battle substance abuse challenges (NCH, 2009).

Since the differential pathways between those who overcome versus those who stagnate in their homelessness remain unclear, attachment and resiliency theories as well as their reciprocal influence across time, contexts, and relationships emerged as the primary focus of this investigation. The intersection between these constructs among those who are homeless was especially relevant as attachment styles and IWMs are thought to underlie pathways into and out of adverse circumstances as they relate to one's access to, relationship with, as well as the utility of various protective and risk factors (Atwood, 2006; Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Masten, 2007). Prior investigations that have considered such constructs, either explicitly or implicitly, have predominately been limited by focusing on these matters in child or adolescent populations only, referring to resilience in a trait-based rather than process-oriented manner, or by gathering and presenting data in historical and decontextualized fashions. By reviewing the distinct and

overlapping features of these constructs as they relate to homelessness, I have demonstrated both the gap in and relevance of this investigation.

In the next chapter, I cover epistemological and theoretical (Crotty, 1998) underpinnings of this research study, explain methodological and specific investigative methods, and provide justification on the basis of prior empirical findings and recommendations. Building on this, I detail procedures related to Institutional Review Board approval, participant recruitment and selection, informed consent, the research setting, and the order and manner in which data were collected and analyzed. Given the prominent role of the researcher as instrument in qualitative undertakings (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) and the potential for researcher bias to impact the research, I dedicate space to enumerate on my background as it related to the research and how I ensured methodological rigor (i.e., credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Morrow, 2005) while having anticipated and addressed possible ethical considerations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

According to Creswell (2007), it is recommended to have one overarching question and then several sub-questions in mind when designing a qualitative inquiry. Additionally, Creswell specified that qualitative research questions are open-ended, evolving, non-directional, tend to restate the purpose of the study in more specific terms, and often start with words such as “what” or “how” rather than “why.” Marshall and Rossman (2006) conceptualized the central research question as falling into one of four types: exploratory--to investigate phenomenon little understood, explanatory--to explain patterns related to phenomenon, descriptive--to describe the phenomenon, and emancipatory--to engage in social action about the phenomenon. Since I brought a critical framework to a phenomenon not well understood at least from a strengths-based perspective, my central research questions were considered both exploratory and emancipatory. Through this inquiry, I asked in what ways did the exploration of homeless adults’ attachment contextualized narratives shed light on their pathway into, adaptation to, and current outlook regarding their present state of homelessness? More specifically, I was interested in the degree and manner in which the cumulative, subjective impact one’s childhood and adult attachment history, individual and systemic risk/protective factors history, and perceived relationship to their community had on the

outlook of adults currently experiencing some level of homelessness. The primary research questions I explored through this investigation, from which follow-up inquiries stemmed, included the following:

Q1 How does the reciprocal influence between perceived context and the individual play out across the lifespan in light of possible:

Q1a Attachment and

Q1b Resiliency themes?

Research Model and Paradigm

Merriam (1998) points to qualitative research having a focus on quality and essence through use of a small, nonrandom, purposeful, and theoretical sample with the goals of describing, understanding, and discovering meaning through comprehensive, holistic, expansive, and richly descriptive findings. Similarly, Creswell (2007) observed qualitative research takes place in a natural, field-focused setting with multiple data sources in the form of words or images being analyzed inductively, recursively, and interactively in order to focus on participants' perspectives, meanings, and subjective (i.e., emic) views framed within a socio-historical context. Arguably, qualitative research affords additional strengths related to emergent ethical and cultural sensitivity, richness through in-depth thick description and idiographic detail, and a relationally oriented approach that resonates with human experience.

Perhaps one of the most prominent features of a qualitative approach is the particular attunement of qualitative research to epistemological and theoretical considerations throughout all phases of the research process. As seen in Figure 1, epistemological, theoretical, methodological, and methods-related decisions are all scaffolded such that the former informs and is infused throughout the latter (Crotty,

1998). Ponterotto (2005) defined epistemology as the study of knowledge, the acquisition of knowledge, and the relationship between the knower (i.e., research participant) and would-be knower (i.e., the researcher); whereas, Crotty defined epistemology as “how we know what we know” (p. 8). This dissertation aligned itself epistemologically with the critical paradigm (Freire, 1972; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Mertens, 2010). The critical paradigm directly informed the theoretical perspectives that were adopted, which in turn philosophically grounded my chosen methodology of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

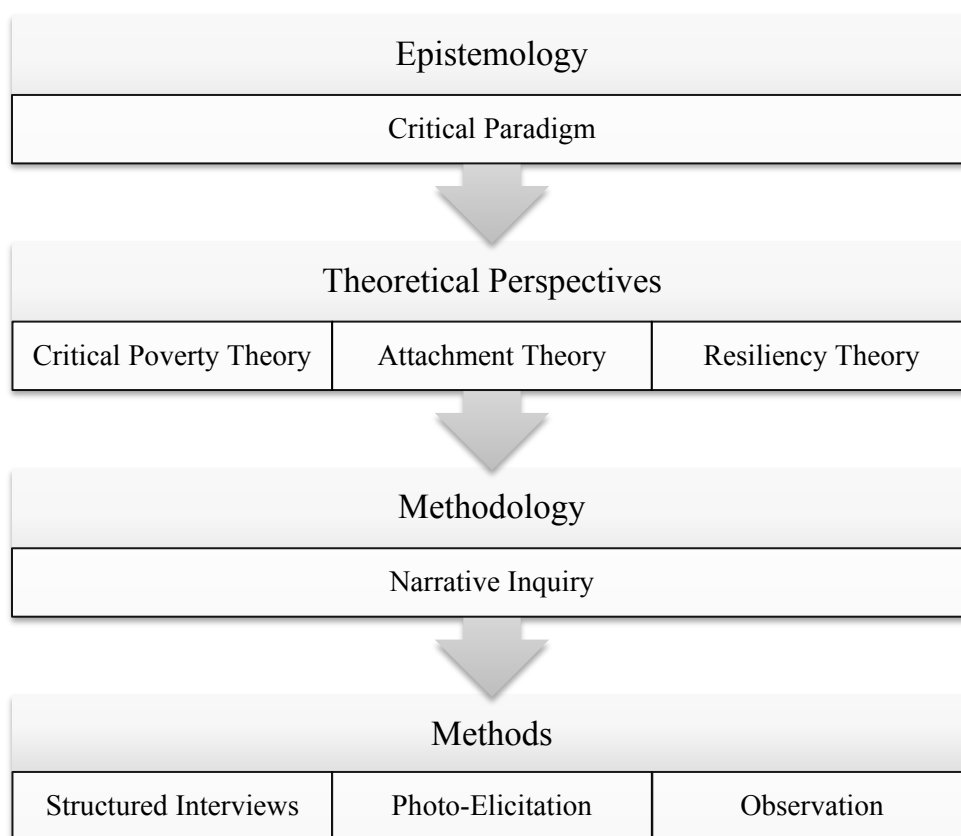


Figure 1. Elements of research (Adapted from Crotty, 1998).

Epistemology

When reflecting on critical theory, one must first compare critical theory as an epistemological paradigm with critical theory as it informs research. With regard to the critical paradigm, axiological and ontological considerations or the role and place of values in the research process and the nature of reality and being, respectively (Ponterotto, 2005), are of the utmost importance. Many draw a parallel between constructionism and critical theory, failing to adequately differentiate the two (Mertens, 2010). Ontologically, constructionism holds multiple, valid constructions of reality and that the notion of a singular reality or truth is a false, positivist notion (Crotty, 1998). Critical theory distinguishes itself from constructionism in that while multiple constructions of reality are acknowledged, they are not considered equally valid as that would overlook the systemic, sociocultural, economic, and historical forces that privilege some versions of reality over others (Mertens, 2010). Thus, critical theory gives primacy to the consideration of contextualized, interacting levels of analysis with a historical perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979); not doing so has the potential to do harm through the maintenance of oppressive and privileging power structure and knowledge bases (Smith, 2012). Social justice and the promotion of human rights from a participant-centered perspective are strong axiological tenets of critical theory (Crotty, 1998).

On continua from subjectivity to objectivity and radical to status quo, constructionism-based research tends to fall in the middle (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Critical-based research tends to fall on the radical extreme and the middle ground of objectivity versus subjectivity (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). In terms of objectivity versus subjectivity (i.e., absolute truth versus relative truth), a lot has to do with the fact that

“meaning is not discovered but constructed” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Ultimately, meaning might be influenced by dominant narratives and discourse (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Easton-Brooks, 2012; White & Epston, 1990). Participants’ narrative recollections were based on a lifetime of subjectively based experiences. At the same time, the meaning individuals pulled from their narratives was meaningful and objectively true for them while often being imbued with more than one meaning (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The same held true for me in my experiencing of the interaction, the shelter, and the meaning I pulled from the research experience though it was important to remain mindful of the influence of power differentials and to fully acknowledge the role of biases throughout. In terms of radical versus status quo (i.e., changing versus describing reality), critical approaches fully leaned toward the radical due to the desired goal of putting research into action for the purposes of social change (Freire, 1972; Mertens, 2010).

Critical inquiry as it informs research takes these ontological and axiological viewpoints and puts them into action. As such, this research was intended to be a transformative act and process in which oppressive systems of knowledge, language, and other marginalizing power structures were improved in some fashion by the collaborative engagement of me and the participants (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Overarching goals of critical inquiry are twofold:

1. Forthrightly deconstruct and raise awareness to myriad forms of social injustices that oppress some while privileging others (Johnson, 2006).

2. Incorporate contextually and historical framed participant data toward the goal of transformative, participant-informed reconstruction of oppressive and privileging systems (Mertens, 2010).

Central to this process of deconstruction and reconstruction were the relationships formed between the participants and me. Thus, in addition to the overarching goals of critical inquiry, I first had to consider the process of deconstruction and reconstruction in the relationship between participants and me, insider and outsider, privileged and oppressed, and knower and would-be known. This process was strived for by addressing matters of power, trust, as well as sociocultural and historical positionality between individuals and within the research act itself (Mertens, 2010; Smith, 2012). That being said, there is a huge emphasis on reflexivity within critical inquiry or what Patton (2002) referred to as the “ongoing examination of what I know and how I know it” (p. 64). Reflexivity involved examining the intersectionality of my own identity markers, participants’ identity markers, how they dynamically interacted and were shaped over time by systems of power and privilege (Johnson, 2006), as well as how these dynamics impacted the entirety of the research process.

In so doing, I more likely demonstrated vital multicultural and relational competence as well as research ethics (Lahman, Geist, Rodriguez, Graglia, & DeRoche, 2011; Mertens, 2010) while having found ways to collaborate and minimize the impact of researcher-participant power differentials. Indeed, one should hardly restrict critical inquiry to the role as researcher as this radical and transformative worldview is a more pervasive way of being (hooks, 1990). To honor such goals, critical inquiry is often an act of bricolage (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005) whereby one’s methodology and methods

are revised and applied in a manner that incorporates indigenous and local perspectives, needs, and desires while rallying against dominant research narratives that would impinge upon more responsive, attuned, and transformative approaches (Pasque, Carducci, Kuntz, & Gildersleeve, 2012; Smith, 2012). Thus, critical inquiry has emerged as a call for reform, a call for transformative action, as well as a call for reflexivity and accountability that allows for more authentic representation and collaboration.

Theoretical Perspectives

Since one's choice of theoretical perspective(s) is informed by the tenets of one's epistemology (Crotty, 1998), this informed the research methodology used (Ponterotto, 2005). Although the critical paradigm (Freire, 1972; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Mertens, 2010) most directly impacted my choice of theoretical perspectives, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the strong strengths-based philosophical influence from the positive psychology movement (Seligman, 1999; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and the theory of goodness (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). What follows is a review of critical poverty theory (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010), attachment theory (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Johnson, 2007), and resiliency theory (Bonanno, 2004; Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002; Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005), both in general terms as well as how they informed my chosen methodology of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and subsequent methods.

It should be noted that the use and imposition of theory into narrative inquiry is not without contention as some argue for its limited use (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). At the same time, others argue that theory can help frame and guide the inquiry

(e.g., Creswell, 2007). Thus, I attempted to strike a balance by being explicit when theory directly influenced the inquiry, utilized some methods that were more participant derived than theoretically guided, and was mindful to bridle (Dahlberg, 2006) my theoretical biases throughout the research process, particularly with data analysis and presentation.

Critical poverty theory. This investigation drew heavily from the emerging, yet limited area of critical poverty theory (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). The tenets of the critical paradigm were directly infused throughout the critical poverty theory (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) and were applied directly to the social injustice of poverty as well as the surrounding research and rhetoric. In part, critical poverty theory posited, “The hegemonic narrative...reflects and creates stigmatized and punitive representations of people in poverty” while asserting the utility of “counter-narratives that try to challenge these reductionist images: the structural/contextual counter-narrative, the agency/resistance counter-narrative, and the counter-narrative of voice and action” (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010, p. 693).

Regardless of which counter-narrative was emphasized, the goal was to challenge perspectives that narrowly focus on blaming the victim and keep the real person with real experiences in the spotlight (Finley & Diversi, 2010; Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). The structure/context counter-narrative disrupted the attribution of individual inferiority (e.g., this person is lazy or incompetent) by observing the more systemic factors that were uncontrollable to the individual yet influenced one’s poverty or homelessness. This counter-narrative also observed how structural impediments (e.g., violent domiciles and environments, low quality schools, unprotected job security in dangerous environments)

often disproportionately impacted women and minority groups (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). Threads of this counter-narrative focus were afforded a space to emerge by the consideration of participants' relationships to their perceived context.

The agency/resistance counter-narrative challenged affronts to individuals' motivation or volition by asserting individuals' life choices and paths were more often reflective of adaptive responses to adverse or limited circumstances (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). Within homelessness research, Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin (2010) observed that such a counter-narrative could give voice to the working homeless, those who challenged harmful political discourse and policy (Finley & Diversi, 2010), and those who were actively striving to assert themselves into the workforce. Traces of this counter-narrative focus emerged within the clinical application of attachment theory (Levenson, 1995; Teyber & McClure, 2011), which views seemingly maladaptive behavior as having adaptive origins within adverse interpersonal/situational circumstances.

Lastly, the voice/action counter-narrative (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010; Moxley et al., 2012) removed barriers to voice by allowing individuals' strengths, alternative perspectives, and inherent wisdom to emerge in protest of the dominant narratives regarding their susceptibility and deficits. Within narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), this counter-narrative emerged from an accurate representation of participants' words, co-construction of the research process, and provided a forum for more politicized dialogue. Echoes of this counter-narrative were also present within resiliency theory (Bonanno, 2004; Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002; Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005).

Thus, drawing from critical poverty theory allowed for more diverse, non-hegemonic representations of the lived experiences of those who were currently homeless while challenging the process of “Othering” and social distancing (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012). Othering and social distancing are processes whereby individuals and groups are perceived and represented in simplified, stereotypic fashions, thereby negatively influencing public perception (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010; Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012). Such perceptions led to justification for worsened treatment, limited resource provision, and effective social exclusion. By having engaged in counter-narrative exploration and dissemination, strides were made toward challenging this damaging process. As Krumer-Nevo and Sidi (2012) observed, the narrative approach was particularly well-suited for challenging the process of Othering and social distancing as it valued participants’ subjective experiences, afforded space for dialogue and interpretation surrounding current and historical occurrences, and drew on researcher reflexivity as an additional vehicle for participant understanding. Krumer-Nevo and Sidi succinctly noted that such approaches attempted to minimize the detrimental effects of objectification, decontextualization, dehistorization, and deauthorization. In effect, this narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and its specific foci allowed for any and all counter-narratives of critical poverty theory to emerge where relevant for the participants (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010).

Attachment theory. As was reviewed in prior chapters, attachment theory (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1977, 1980, 1988; Bretherton, 1996; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Johnson, 2007) has become a mainstay within the counseling and developmental disciplines. Attachment theory informed some aspects of

data collection, analysis, and ultimately representation within this investigation. Bowlby recognized that the quality of one's early interactions with caregivers and other attachment figures had a large impact on the development of one's attachment style and underlying IWMs of self and others. As Hauser et al. (2006) noted, attachment theory is the "study of the bonds that form between a young child and its caretakers, and the ramifications of these bonds in later life" (p. 215). Internal working models are thought to not only influence whether or not someone views themselves as worthy of love and attention but also whether or not they expect a reciprocal relationship in their interactions with others. Internal working models (Hauser et al., 2006) have elements of both content (e.g., ideas, thoughts, feelings) and structure (e.g., the degree to which they are accessible to consciousness, coherent, and integrated into action).

Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1977, 1980, 1988) posited attachment theory should be construed as a lifespan theory in that the nature and quality of early interactions can dynamically influence the nature and quality of subsequent interactions. Others have since worked to refine and extrapolate from attachment-related classification systems (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Crowell & Owens, 1996) and sought to apply its tenets to adult romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Johnson, 2007). Through such efforts, attachment theory has evolved to recognize that IWMs are influenced by both early and ongoing encounters with significant others. These IWMs become a modifiable filter through which events are perceived, influenced, and later recalled (Levenson, 1995; Teyber & McClure, 2011). They are also thought to play a role in how one seeks out and utilizes interpersonal and romantic relationships in adulthood (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Johnson, 2007) in addition to playing a role in situations that activate or signal distress,

how one negotiates or copes with such distress, and how one cares for others who are in distress (Crowell & Owens, 1996).

Bretherton (1996) argued that more open-ended, free-flowing narratives that related to perceiving past and present attachment figures (e.g., parents, mentors, romantic partners) as available and likely to be helpful were important for secure attachment classification. Bretherton also demonstrated how IWMs that allowed for effective intrapersonal and interpersonal coping were a more accurate means of gauging secure attachment. Indeed, Bretherton argued that IWMs allowed one to have a filter for understanding the process of relationships in general. Similarly, Fonagy et al. (1995) found one's ability to engage in reflective functioning, both in general and specifically surrounding the nature and quality of one's attachment relationships, might serve as an individual resiliency factor that could buffer the impact of adverse circumstances and traumas. Through this study, I was interested to see how themes related to attachment emerged and interacted across the lifespan, especially as they related to one's narrative representation, attachment figures as protective or risk factors, level of attachment security, and underlying IWMs, major turning points, and contextual interplay.

Resiliency theory. Resiliency theory has been advanced beyond the consideration of inherent or stagnant traits that the rare individual possesses to buffer adversity as though he/she was covered in Teflon. More modern conceptualizations of resiliency cast it as a commonplace or ordinary (Masten, 2001) process of responding adaptively to adverse circumstances, often by drawing from individual, familial, and communal protective factors (Bonanno, 2004; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002). Protective factors (Baumrind, 1968; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten

& Reed, 2002) have been found to encompass relationships, circumstances, resources, as well as characteristics or qualities that help mitigate distress either through prevention or assistance during a time of need.

Masten and Coatsworth (1998) described protective factors at the following levels: individual (e.g., emotional regulation, positive self-perception, high self-efficacy, spirituality, and a sense of humor), familial (e.g., close and supportive relationships, positive family climate, and authoritative parenting style), and communal (e.g., effective school, and prosocial and supportive relationships with adults, peers, and organizations). Risk factors, then, involve the accumulation of the opposite or relative absence of protective factors such that the nature of one's relationships, circumstances, resources, as well as characteristics or qualities that place one at risk of greater or sustained exposure to adversity, lead to worsened/maladaptive coping (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002). Thus, in this investigation, I explored the presence (or lack thereof) and role participants' perceived individual, familial, and communal protective/risk factors played in shaping their narrative life course and present circumstances for better or worse.

Methodology

When reflecting on the philosophy of John Dewey, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) noted the foundation of social sciences is ultimately derived from human experience and the study of it. Experience is also connected with the social context as people are simultaneously individuals and individuals in relation to others. After all, we all lead "storied lives on storied landscapes" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 8). In this

investigation, I drew from a narrative inquiry qualitative methodology. In line with the narrative tradition, participants' life stories were of interest.

According to Pinnegar and Daynes (2006), a narrative might not only be the method of investigation, it could also be the phenomenon one examines. As such, I obtained participants' oral histories that consisted in part of gathering personal reflections of events and their explanations for them (Plummer, 1983). Creswell (2007) stated that inquiry focused on narratives "may be guided by a theoretical lens" (p. 55)--critical poverty, attachment, and resiliency theories in this case. The use of related theory was also in accordance with Denzin's (1989) approach to narratives. Additionally, I followed Denzin's suggestion that one should first explore individuals' experiences, determine the stories that emerge from those experiences, look for major turning points within the narratives, and convey the narrative with thick descriptions. Creswell pointed to narrative inquiry as a means of developing a chronological understanding of how an individual's life experiences, and those they choose to speak to in particular, have unfolded and been integrated across the life span. By developing an understanding of the particular while being mindful of players, context, continuity and the interplay between them, I collaboratively developed a holistic understanding of the participants' narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

When pressed for definition, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) defined narrative inquiry as a collaborative effort "between research and participants, over time, in a place or series of places.... An inquirer enters this matrix ... in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives" (p. 20). Although there is a certain degree of ambiguity and definitional resistance in the narrative

approach, Clandinin and Connelly found several common and key threads throughout most narrative inquiries. The first, temporality, relates to the notion of continuity--events that simultaneously have elements of past, present, and future perception. Additionally, Clandinin and Connelly were in agreement with various theorists who observed the relevance of unity and continuity within one's narrative, concepts that lent themselves well to considering attachment and resiliency dynamics that emerged. Thus, narrative inquiry became a valuable methodology for coming to understand the developmental trajectory and impact of attachment relationships and resiliency protective/risk factors over time.

Next, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argued that people involved in the narrative exchange are impacted by temporality in that one must capture others' respective processes of change, concurrent history, and present state in order to more accurately represent their narrative. Similar arguments applied to specific actions and experiences that were recalled. As such, as a narrative inquirer, I had to form relationships that allowed me to approach understanding participants' present circumstances and non-verbal communication as well as to reflect on interactive and internal processes. Throughout the process, I also had to recognize that temporal, spatial, and interpersonal "context is ever present" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 32) and that context shifts over the life span. After all, participants had not always lived in the shelter or on the streets. Lastly, I had to be able to tolerate ambiguity as in narrative: "Interpretations of events can always be otherwise. There is a sense of tentativeness, usually expressed as a kind of uncertainty, about an event's meaning" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 31). This same tension holds true for any retrospective recall but was not necessarily a limitation here.

The manner in which events and relationships were recalled and construed as having an impact on current functioning proved thematic in of itself.

When conducting a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), one must consider characteristics of the storyteller, the catalyst for his/her tale and whom he/she is telling it to, as well as potential factors that might have inhibited his/her expression (e.g., relational variables, power dynamics, language or other cultural barriers, or emotional/functional difficulties with recall). This particular aspect of constraints further highlights the need for reflexivity in the research process (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012; Lahman et al., 2011). Therefore, narrative inquiry is often referred to as an act of co-construction or as Welikala (2007) put it, “Narratives are jointly constructed between the researcher and the participant” (p. 132).

Within this methodology, knowledge and knower are viewed as interdependent and embedded within history, context, culture, language, experience, and understanding (Etherington, 2004; Hauser et al., 2006). Thus, one seeks out how people make meaning of their personal experiences alongside the deeper cultural narratives, recognizing that meanings are multiple and context dependent (Etherington & Bridges, 2011; Hoshmand, 2005). The examination of multiple meanings in a contextualized setting recognizes that narratives are impacted by dynamics of power, privilege, and oppression. When applied with the critical paradigm, narrative inquiry has the potential to remove barriers to voice (Bloom, 2002).

Several authors (Chase, 2005; Dumbleton, 2005; Hauser et al., 2006; Moxley et al., 2012) have cogently argued for the appropriateness of narrative inquiry with homeless and attachment/resiliency research. While Chase (2005) merely mentioned

that narrative inquiry has been used with a critical paradigm for research on homelessness in the past, Dumbleton (2005) observed that use of narrative inquiry was an effective means of removing barriers to voice for those who are homeless. Additionally, she noted the telling of an individual story had the added benefit of providing a more approachable and less daunting understanding of the experience of homelessness in addition to how the general public could provide assistance.

Moxley et al. (2012), through the Telling My Story (TMS) Project, noted narrative inquiry could be an effective methodology when it came to developing a more nuanced understanding of risk and resilience among the homeless population. Hauser et al. (2006) observed narratives were particularly well suited for the study of resiliency, given their ability to draw on how attitudes, thoughts, and feelings reciprocally interacted with the experience of adversity. Recognizing that resilience is a process and means of responding to adverse circumstances that can be enhanced through fostering individual, relational, and communal protective factors, Moxley et al. noted narrative inquiry is “a portal through which helpers can truly come to better understand the dynamic forces of homelessness...and come to understand how resilience factors into a woman’s efforts to extricate herself from homelessness altogether” (p. 472). Some of Moxley et al.’s participants noted narrative inquiry was also valuable as a means for allowing them to feel understood and heard while coming to know their own strengths. Indeed, narratives that draw from positive attributes such as strengths and resiliency allow for narratives of efficacy to emerge (Washington & Moxley, 2009). Regarding specific resiliency protective factors, Moxley et al. found resiliency was a transactional process founded on connection with others. Emergent themes related to this included benefits derived from

forming pseudo-families, observing or recalling positive role models, listening and learning from the survival tips of others, using folk wisdom, and leaning on faith (Moxley et al., 2012).

As can be seen, narrative inquiry holds a rich history within social science research with applications not limited to the study of narratives from those who are homeless (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Polkinghorne (1988) proposed two primary types of narrative inquiries: the descriptive and the explanatory. Descriptive narratives attempt to describe and understand how lives have been interpreted and constructed and explanatory narratives seek to understand how individuals make causal connections between events and relationships. Although elements of these two primary types emerged in the investigation, participants' narratives were not restricted to these two types. Indeed, through my use of narrative inquiry, the emancipatory tone of counter-narratives (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) was afforded space to emerge.

Research Participants

Thirteen participants from two different transitional homeless shelters were recruited and with whom I reached the point of saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1998; Morrow, 2005) regarding thematic elements of attachment and resiliency. These shelters were located in different cities and selected on the basis of researcher access and prior research involvement. Striving for maximum variation (Merriam, 1998), the sample was fairly diverse with regard to age, gender, ability status, and racial/ethnic make-up. Participants were recruited by means of purposeful criterion (Polkinghorne, 2005) and convenience methods of sampling. Following the initial recruitment efforts (see Appendix A) and a review of informed consent (see Appendix

B), participants were effectively screened for eligibility by responding to questions from an initial demographics form (see Appendix C). Participants selected a pseudonym of their choice and then were individually screened by asking for verbal responses to the demographic questions (see Appendix C). Questions 10, 15, and 16 screened whether or not participants were eligible for the study, were single, accompanied parents, or veterans; those actively leaving violent situations were not allowed to participate.

Given the particulars of this investigation, certain participant delimitations were put in place. Out of concern for safety, those who indicated they are actively leaving or escaping an imminently violent situation were not included in this study. Morrell-Bellai et al. (2000) observed escaping an abusive relationship was a common factor precipitating many women's transition into homelessness. The goal was not to exclude women or individuals who ever experienced violence in their lives but rather those who were actively leaving such situations. In addition to the possibility of acute trauma reactions complicating and clouding the data gathering process, the safety concerns stemming from community-based engagement as part of the research process warranted delimiting such individuals within this particular investigation.

Individuals who were the sole caregiver of minor children also residing in the shelter were not allowed to participate. This was partly out of concern for overburdening those individuals due to extensive participant demands. However, this delimitation was largely in response to shelter policies that required minors be accompanied by their caregivers at all times. As the presence of children in the room would have significantly altered the interview process, such individuals were not included in this investigation.

The desire to delimit unique subsets of the population of individuals who were homeless was one reason veterans were not included in this study. Veterans have been found to have separate and unique considerations regarding their pathway into homelessness (APA, 2009); homelessness-related difficulties were often connected with post-combat sequelae rather than developmental (e.g., attachment-related) factors. Thus, while it was important to understand these particular pathways, veterans were not included in this investigation due to their separate and unique considerations as well as the differential availability of resources for veteran treatment and reintegration (e.g., Veterans Affairs system).

The APA (2009) also found those with prior histories of juvenile justice, child welfare agency (e.g., foster care), imprisonment, hospitalization, major mental health concerns, and chronic health conditions had unique considerations related to pathways into homelessness. For instance, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth and those aging out of foster care might be at higher risk for homelessness, especially at an early age (Edidin et al., 2011). Individuals with such considerations were allowed to participate with such aspects having been elaborated on in the telling of their respective narratives.

If it was discovered individuals were not eligible for participation due to inclusion criterion, their records were shredded and they were thanked and debriefed. No such encounters took place in this undertaking. Beyond the 13 participants included in this study, one individual who had been recruited was no longer accessible prior to the completion of data collection. Two other individuals who had been recruited intentionally withdrew from the study. Information for these three individuals was

incorporated into the reflexivity portions only. Had I sensed English language learning or illiteracy concerns proved a barrier for some participants, those participants would have been allowed to ask for instructional clarification, had simplified oral instructions provided, and/or used alternative representational strategies. No such adaptations were necessary in this study.

Setting

Participants were recruited from two religiously affiliated, transitional homeless shelters from two different communities in the Rocky Mountain region (i.e., one urban/metropolitan and the other on the outskirts of a rural, midsized city with varying political and economic climates). I had conducted prior research at both shelters in the recent past. Varying locales were used to have a better understanding of the reciprocal influence of diverse perceived contexts on participants' narratives. The specific shelters were also chosen based on convenience stemming from existing connections to point persons for facilitating site access and successful navigation of one site in particular throughout previous investigations (Roche, 2012, 2013). All shelters were run by the same organization, a deliberate choice made to allow for variations within the broader community beyond the homeless shelter to become more salient within participants' narratives. Data collection took place in private rooms with each respective shelter, although two participants requested to have interviews take place outside on shelter grounds. One participant requested we conduct his member check at a local coffee shop because he was on pass from the shelter at the time.

What follows is a description of the shelters in which this investigation took place. Since both shelters were run by the same organization, many of the same policies

and characteristics applied to both of them. The more rural shelter was a 60-bed, religiously affiliated homeless shelter on a major bus route in the Rocky Mountain region. The shelter is open year round from 5 p.m. to 7 a.m. during the week and all day on the weekends and during inclement weather. The shelter is open to men, women, and children for a typical length of stay from 14 to 60 days and up to 120 days. With the exception of unaccompanied children, any of the combinations ranging from single men to survivors of domestic violence with and without children are welcome to stay at the shelter. Single male residents without children stay on a separate floor from the rest of the shelter residents. The shelter is also a clean shelter--residents must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol upon admission. Every time upon re-entry, residents must successfully pass a Breathalyzer test to continue their stay.

As this was a rather new shelter, facilities were fairly functional, accommodating, secure, and clean. The biggest complaints related to air circulation in the building, which from my experience could be stuffy in the men's dormitory area, as well as the balancing act between locked entry for safety and item security with the residents' desire for accessibility. Residents are expected to contribute with various chores to maintain the cleanliness of the facility. The majority of the beds lie within more communal rooms, although a handful of smaller rooms are available to families. Residents have access to dressers, storage lockers, shower facilities, washers/dryers, recreational living spaces, a cafeteria, a computer lab, a church space, and on-site staff and caseworkers. Pamphlets, flyers, and binders containing resources and job-related information are readily available in the lobby for residents to obtain. Presently the shelter operates with overnight emergency and transitional housing services. Caseworkers are on-site to facilitate

reintegration and community resource ties are continually strengthening. Staff members are there to support residents, handle new resident admissions, deal with emergent challenges, and enforce shelter policies. This shelter reported that 65% of residents obtained secure, sustainable housing upon leaving the shelter over the course of the prior year.

The other shelter was centrally located in an urban environment with another overnight shelter across the street, a nearby “crack alley” down the block, and was surrounded by newer, high-priced condominiums. This shelter has space for 126 single men, 48 women, 21 families, and an adjoining but separate overflow space for up to 100 men. Residents gain entry to the shelter by means of a lottery system. The family area is on a separate floor and has staff offices, a general community room with a TV, some books and toys, and a few different play areas with fun decorations and interactive things for children. There are separate wings for men, women, as well as veterans since they are allowed differential access to the shelter, outside services, and have different lengths of stay eligibility. A large cafeteria space has a small employment center with computers in the back room; resident meetings are often hosted in the cafeteria. Similar amenities and programs are available to residents here. There is a back storage area where many donations of food, clothing, and other materials are routinely accepted. Likewise, there are expectations whereby residents help ensure chores are completed daily. The common areas have a generally open, communal feel to them. Staff appeared generally helpful, friendly, and engaged with the residents. This shelter reported that upon leaving, 50% of residents moved into stable housing whereas 65% left the shelter with some source of income over the course of the past year.

Research Methods

To explore the research questions, I utilized a number of methods (i.e., structured attachment and resiliency themed interview, photo-elicitation interview, with minimal observation and the incorporation of field texts) that encompassed both participant-driven and researcher-driven structured and even less structured approaches. Hoshmand (2005) noted a storied account of narratives might be constructed from various methods including but not limited to various types of interviews, observations, artifacts, written reports, and more. Qualitative researchers, particularly those who align with both critical paradigms and narrative inquiry, often consider methods-related decisions as an act of bricolage (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Bricolage suggests that specific choices of research methods are based on their appropriateness for adequately addressing the research questions of interest (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). As noted by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), “When researchers enter the field, they experience shifts and changes, constantly negotiating, constantly reevaluating, and maintaining flexibility and openness to an ever-changing landscape” (p. 71). Both Chase (2005) and Clandinin (2006) enumerated on many of the possible methods a narrative inquirer could draw from including stories, autobiography, journals, letters, social media, observation, interviews, conversations, video, photos, timelines, and more. To remain aligned with critical paradigmatic and theoretical underpinnings of this narrative inquiry, one must

focus on questions that help participant address cultural context, their embodied engagement in the events, their senses, feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and ideas, the significance of other people, the choices and actions of the teller: based on values, beliefs, and aims, historical continuity, and metaphors, symbols, and creative, intuitive ways of knowing which create pictures that capture vivid representations of experiences. (Etherington & Bridges, 2011, p. 12)

Of more central concern than any particular method was the researcher-participant relationship. Prior to, during, and after participant recruitment and the informed consent process, I took advantage of opportunities to be genuine, transparent, and form authentic connections.

In many ways, Moxley et al.'s (2012) TMS Project served as a model for many methods-related decisions in this investigation (i.e., use of photo-elicitation and use of interviews with a focus on resiliency as an explicitly individual, relational, and contextual process). This investigation furthered their resiliency-focused narrative inquiry by incorporating an explicit focus on attachment theory in addition to broadening the target population beyond older African American women who were homeless. Regardless of which methods are selected, narrative inquirers must recognize that method choices can be fairly open-ended so long as participant narratives receive the primary focus and that triangulation (Denzin, 1970) of data sources properly contextualizes the narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The construction of in-depth, structured interview questions was based in part on the success with select questions from a pilot study related to attachment chronicles across one's narrative (Roche, 2012; see Appendix D) and select questions from a pilot study related to aspects of a transitional homeless shelter that promoted resident strengths and resilient responding (Roche, 2013; see Appendix E). Primary questions d through f within the interview protocol (see Appendix F) used in the current study were developed based on tenets of attachment theory (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Johnson, 2007). Resiliency theory (Bonanno, 2004; Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002; Tedeschi & Kilmer,

2005) was drawn on for primary questions b, g, and h, as well as secondary questions related to protective and risk factor dynamics. Questions a, c, and i were utilized for rapport building and contextualization of narratives. Thus, Appendix F covers the structured interview questions that explored themes of attachment and resiliency across participant narratives. All interviews were audiotape recorded and transcribed into verbatim scripts. Observational notes (Polkinghorne, 2005) were included in this process to add context and “shed light on the meaning of a participant’s oral comments” (p. 143) while having ensured content and emotional accuracy (Merriam, 1998).

I gathered oral life history information with particular emphasis on attachment, resiliency, contextual, and emancipatory-related themes, primarily through use of in-depth, structured interviews (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Polkinghorne, 2005); subsequent interviews were based on photo-elicitation projects (Ortega-Alcázar & Dyck, 2012) as well as through the member checking process. Multiple interviews allowed me to better explore participants’ current situational outlook and how participants integrated their narrative while allowing for diverse counter-narratives to emerge (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). Polkinghorne (2005) argued that one-shot interviews were often insufficient due to their inability to adequately build the necessary rapport that leads to nuanced depth. Although some of my interviews were more structured than others, I ultimately followed participants’ leads down the paths they chose to travel. After all, interviews, the primary method of data gathering, were conducted in a dynamic, organic, dialogical process (Etherington & Bridges, 2011). With participant consent, all structured and photo-elicitation interviews were audiotape recorded in their entirety to best capture content, non-verbal inflections, and meaning.

Questions allowed participants to reflect on the nature of important relationships (e.g., attachment relationships) they have had from past to present (Haydon et al., 2012). Elements such as the valence with which relationships were recalled, how relationships were used during times of distress, and how they influenced feelings about oneself were incorporated. Like Bretherton (1996) suggested, I tried to get a sense of the use of relationships and how they were constructed. In essence, I examined attachment as it related to being a protective or risk factor. Additionally, questions targeted individual, familial, and communal protective factors (Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002) as well as how they had been utilized to overcome difficulties over time. A few of the questions were adapted from the Adult Attachment Interview (Main & Goldwyn, 1994), a developmental interview designed for clinical and research purposes to retrospectively tap into conscious and subconscious elements, influences on, and presentations of one's attachment style. Mainly I included some questions that allowed me to gain a sense of narrative coherence and depth surrounding important relationships in addition to how participants coped with difficulties. More nuanced recall and balanced self-other reliance was thought to reflect a more optimal secure attachment pattern (Main & Goldwyn, 1994).

An additional consideration for this interview stemmed from the findings of Moxley et al. (2012) wherein they noted participants frequently felt professionals had an off-putting tendency to focus on their deficits rather than their strengths. For example, Cosner Berzin and De Marco (2010) focused on the detrimental effects of poverty as it related to early home leaving, early marriage, and early parenthood. Although Kennedy et al. (2010) worked with adolescent mothers and still predominantly highlighted

negative aspects or risk chains, they offered a more balanced approach to understanding the process of resiliency across the lifespan, noting the positive benefits of relationship building, mentorship, more active and assertive coping, and trauma-focused care. While this structured interview focused on participants' early history, how susceptibility to homelessness was formed, triggers or turning points, and their actual experience of homelessness (e.g., functioning, perception, and coping strategies), a good portion of the interview focused on the influence of perceived internal and external strengths. As participants responded to question prompts, I informally generated a timeline and thereby placed their annals of experiences, memories, relationships, as well as their chronicles around particular topics (e.g., attachment and resiliency themes) in chronologically and contextually appropriate locations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Photo-elicitation Interview

To align the data collection approach with a more critical stance, I utilized photo-elicitation interviews (Ortega-Alcázar & Dyck, 2012). This method of data gathering allowed participants to co-construct the research process and thereby allowed me to avoid overly imposing a research agenda (Allen, 2009). Participants were provided with digital cameras (a few elected to utilize their personal cell phones) that were gathered via donation. Participants generated and reflected on images they took based on their contextualized experience, all of which were generated independently of my influence as researcher. Participants were asked to capture images or scenes that resonated with them in terms of their identity, contextualized experience, and way of viewing the world. After the participants had a sufficient period of time (approximately two weeks at most), I met with them for a follow-up interview based on the images they had captured.

In the semi-structured follow-up interview, participants reflected on the thoughts, feelings, symbolism, or memories connected to the picture(s) they took (see Appendix G). After returning the cameras to me, interested participants were provided copies of their photographs. As found by Hodgetts, Chamberlain, and Radley (2007), “The inclusion of photo-production in this research has allowed us to interrogate these dimensions and to explore how a sense of belonging and place are often crystalized in particular locales” (p. 277). Mindful that photographs might have had missing pieces due to time, location, and instructional constraints (Croghan, Griffin, Hunter, & Phoenix, 2008), I accounted for this by allowing participants to discuss images not captured (Hodgetts et al., 2007). From there, we collaborated to select three photographs they wanted to have included in the final representation of their narrative.

Patterson et al. (2012) noted an increased recognition among researchers regarding the need to focus on individuals’ understanding and differential experience of both place and community including their respective social and physical elements. Photo-elicitation interviews have emerged as a useful method for generating participant-led data regarding this facet of participants’ narratives (Bukowski & Buetow, 2011). The use of photographs as a method for data gathering has become an increasingly common presence in narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and has increasingly been applied to research regarding homelessness as well (Bukowski & Buetow, 2011; Hodgetts, Radley, Chamberlain, & Hodgetts, 2007; Peterson, Antony, & Thomas, 2012; Radley, Hodgetts, & Cullen, 2005). The analysis of participant-driven, photo-elicitation projects has illuminated such diverse findings as the deprived and isolated relational,

spatial, and material aspects of health inequalities, the alienating effects of stigma, the hindrances of bureaucracy, the restorative nature of safe spaces, and the layered lives led.

Clark-Ibanez (2004) observed this method offered the benefit of allowing researchers to “use photographs as a tool to expand on questions and simultaneously. Participants can use photographs to prove a unique way to communicate dimensions of their lives” (p. 1507). Van Auken, Frisvoll, and Stewart (2010) found use of photo-elicitation offered the added benefit of providing rich and unique forms of data that could provide tangible images of unconscious representations (e.g., IWMs) and metaphors. This was in addition to their observation that photo-elicitation had the potential to reduce differences in class, knowledge, and power between researcher and participant as well as a potential to empower participants (Van Auken et al., 2010). Similar critical paradigm alignment was found by Hodgetts et al. (2007) who noted that interviewing based on participant-driven photographs had reduced levels of discomfort and the sense of intimidation participants who were homeless felt in more traditional, semi-structured interviews.

Moxley et al. (2012) used arts-based methods as an adjunct to their narrative inquiry. Their participants took “photographs of those places in the community from which they obtained help and assistance, as well as those places where they found rejection, disdain, or degradation,” and then later elaborated on how the images represented the fostering or attenuation of resilience; as they put it, “Photographs extend people’s narratives and through image reveal what the participants see as the places that compromise or fortify resilience” (Moxley et al., 2012, p. 473). My instructions to

participants (see Appendix G) was derivative of this. I also provided instructions for the purposes of participant and communal safety.

Observation

Observational data (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) were used modestly in this narrative inquiry. The observational data gathered here included my observations of the physical setting, informal interactions, and participants' non-verbal behavior. By spending some time observing in and around the shelters, I was able to make note of how participants interacted with and were treated by others and the types of environments (i.e., the homeless shelters) where current lived experience took place.

Field Texts

Within narrative inquiry, researcher reflexivity is a primary instrument for gathering, interpreting, and re-presenting or restorying the data (i.e., stories of lived experience) starting from a curious, not knowing position (Etherington & Bridges, 2011). Therefore, researcher field texts (Creswell, 2007) were maintained following all interviews and observational periods. This was done to take into account the influencing factors of context, gestures, nonverbal behavior, and other interpersonal variables such as attachment style (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

By using field texts, I was able to maintain more effective boundaries between participant engagement and transactional reflection by adding richness, complexity, and depth to the analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I was also able to reflect on how participants might have experienced me, the researcher, based on non-verbal communication. These texts were a blend of elements of both researcher and participant with “notes on what you did, notes on what I did with you, notes on what was around us,

notes on where we were, notes on feelings, notes on current events, notes on remembrances of past times” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 82). These field texts were paired with a concurrent reflexivity journal (Merriam, 1998), which allowed me to reflect on my experiences of interacting with participants as well as to bridle (Dahlberg, 2006) my personal and theoretical biases as they emerged in focus, interpretation, and representation.

Procedures

This next section covers pragmatic elements of this dissertation, answering such questions as who, what, where, when, and how. Beginning with considerations of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I move into describing how participants were recruited, selected, and provided informed consent. Then I review the manner and order in which data were collected as well as the strategies utilized for data analysis. Lastly, this section concludes with a consideration of methodological rigor or trustworthiness before proceeding to discuss ethical considerations and how they were addressed.

Institutional Review Board Approval

Before data collection began, I received Institutional Review Board approval through an expedited review process in light of the potentially vulnerable population queried in this investigation (see Appendix H). As I have already alluded to, participants who are homeless have been described as vulnerable (Dickson-Swift et al., 2007) and thus in need of certain forms of protection in research. Like others (Lahman, 2008), I ascribe to the belief that participants who are homeless can be viewed as competent, capable, and yet vulnerable at the same time. For instance, some participants were

primary caregivers, gainfully employed, as well as uniquely talented, skilled, or highly educated despite residing in a homeless shelter.

I also obtained approval from shelter coordinators for accessing the population of interest in the study. This proved an easy task as contact had been made with shelter coordinators from previous investigations and they had expressed interest in future research due to the information that could be gleaned. Regardless, a script was generated for obtaining consent for site access, permission to recruit on site, and access to a confidential space to conduct interviews (see Appendix I).

Participant Recruitment

Out of respect for the multiplicity of experiences of homelessness and need for methodological clarity, Lahman et al. (2013) argued it was important to specify how one's sample was accessed when conducting research on homelessness. Following point person approval of site access (see Appendix I), participants were recruited by making an announcement during a pre-scheduled appearance at sites' respective weekly resident meetings. This recruitment announcement more or less followed a pre-established script (see Appendix A). At each shelter, I recruited three to four male participants and two to three female participants, having narrowed larger participant pools by randomly drawing names. As Polkinghorne (2005) observed, there is an iterative process between sampling, data collection, data analysis, and back again. Thus, while I had hoped one recruitment effort per site would have been sufficient, this plan had to evolve in light of selected participant drop-off and attrition. Replacement participants were selected from the pool of individuals who had initially expressed interest.

With regard to the participants themselves, purposeful criterion (Merriam, 1998; Polkinghorne, 2005) and convenience sampling was used. The sample was purposeful as participants recruited from the respective shelters were open to sharing their experiences, such that potential counter-narratives (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) were constructed. Additionally, all participants met the criteria of being English-speaking, non-veteran, adults of all ages capable of providing consent, not in the immediate aftermath or midst of a violent situation (e.g., leaving an abusive relationship, escaping from gang affiliation, etc.), not the sole caretaker for minor children in the shelter, and met a current homelessness status defined as a state of needing to utilize the resources of a homelessness shelter for lodging for the duration of data collection. To protect the welfare of those at the shelters, residents at the shelters are screened by staff upon admission for being under the influence of substances, severe mental/cognitive disabilities, and sexual offender status. In many ways, this provided a natural screen for obtaining participants capable of giving consent. Convenient sampling (Polkinghorne, 2005) was also used as I made use of participants present at the shelters who were open to the entirety of the data gathering and member checking process.

Informed Consent

Participants were engaged in the process of informed consent following their expression of interest after initial recruitment efforts. Once each prospective participant had a copy of the informed consent document (see Appendix B) to review, I verbally read the consent statement to those individuals to ensure complete comprehension. Between the recruitment dialogue (see Appendix A) and the informed consent document, I thoroughly described the study as well as participant requirements and potential risks and

benefits. A copy of the consent form was provided to each participant to keep. I asked for questions and allowed the potential participants to ask as many questions as they felt was needed. As part of this initial informed consent process, participants were provided a list of mental health services (see Appendix J) should they have found themselves too emotionally overburdened by the research process and did not have access to mental health services. Mental health services were selected on the basis of proximity to the homeless shelters and availability of low to no cost services. As appropriate, the discussion surrounding these resources was revisited throughout the research process and upon debriefing with a few participants.

Traditional informed consent procedures were followed, allowing for non-signed consent forms and participant-selected pseudonyms. Given the in-depth and highly relational nature of narrative inquiry, I anticipated that some participants might not have wanted their identity fully stripped from their story through the blanket application of pseudonyms (Barnett, 2012; Fischer, 2012; Fisher, 2008; Fitzgerald & Hamilton, 1996; Sieck, 2012). After careful explanation of the informed consent process, the intended use of participants' narratives, and having reviewed the presentation of their narratives through member checking, participants' requests to utilize their real first names were honored. All but a few names of participants were changed to pseudonyms per those individuals' request prior to the start of the audio-recorded portion of the research process.

Given the need to balance considerations of participant risk, level of involvement, benefits, and the potential for coercion, various approaches to guide researchers for compensation, or payment in kind (PinK; Schonfeld, Brown, Weniger, & Gordon, 2003),

have been advocated. Payment in kind philosophy considers remuneration at the level of minimum wage to be appropriate. Based on current minimum wage rates and anticipated length of involvement for participants, I decided upon a value of \$50. Payments were staggered, contingent upon task completion (i.e., \$30 following the completion of the structured and photo-elicitation interviews as well as \$20 following participation in the member check process), and presented in the form of gift cards. Participants were given the option to be compensated in the form of donations to the shelter, though none selected this option. Schonfeld et al. (2003) presented arguments against PinK due to coercion, exploitation, and autonomy concerns with a potentially vulnerable population while others argued such approaches to remuneration were appropriate (Lahman et al., 2013).

Data Collection

Following initial participant recruitment, the provision of informed consent, and the gathering of demographic information, I worked with participants on an individual basis to coordinate the sequencing and scheduling of tasks based on mutual availability and completion time concerns.

The first structured interviews (see Appendix F) were scheduled with participants shortly after the initial recruitment, informed consent, and demographic collection. For several participants, demographic information was collected at this time instead. At this point, I also provided instructions and digital cameras for the photo-elicitation interview process (see Appendix G). Following the structured interview, I worked with participants to gauge their progress with their photo-elicitation project and schedule a date for recollecting the digital camera and conducting the follow-up interview. My intention was to engage in interview transcription concurrently, working on a staggered basis with

different participants so I could more efficiently streamline the process of member checking and my involvement at a given locale. Due to time constraints, the data analysis, member checking, and peer checking processes were ultimately delayed. Table 1 provides an approximate timeline of participant data collection.

Table 1

Timeline for Data Collection

Step	Activities	Approximate Time Elapsed
Step 1	Participant recruitment Informed consent Demographic interview (for some) Assigning photo-elicitation project	0 Days
Step 2	Structured interview Gauge photo-elicitation progress	2-7 Days
Step 3	Photo-elicitation interview Field notes and audit trail throughout	7-14 Days
Step 4	Coding and triangulation Vignette construction	1-12 Months
Step 5	Debriefing/Member checking Peer Checking	1-12 Months

Data Analysis

Within narrative inquiry, data analysis occurs throughout the entire process; thus, data gathering and analysis was a simultaneous, iterative, and organic process. Chase (2005) and Clandinin (2006) observed analysis procedures often entail transcription, thematic organization, peer checks, member checks, and more. Since this could be a convoluted process (Polkinghorne, 1988), individual narrative construction was aided by

personally engaging in relatively prompt data organization, transcribing, and coding. Field notes were typed and maintained in dated, context and participant specified, password protected computer files in conjunction with interviews fully transcribed verbatim. Coding took place on the computer documents to allow for revision and avoid data loss. When coding, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) encouraged the use of narrative mindedness:

Narrative inquirers begin to *narratively code* their field texts. For example, names of the characters...places where actions and events occurred, story lines that interweave and interconnect, gaps or silences that become apparent, tensions that emerge, and continuities and discontinuities. (p. 131)

Analysis was also an iterative process in the sense that as new data were integrated, the narratives were revised. In many ways, a series of interim texts were revised in light of new data, peer checking, participant member checking, and cross-narrative thematic considerations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

To enhance trustworthiness, transcripts and field texts were read and reread to more holistically comprehend the narratives. From there, locating significant statements within the transcripts of each participant, or intra-narrative analysis, allowed me to develop clusters of meaning, which ultimately formed the statements into themes (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). I broadly followed Denzin's (1989) suggestion that one should first explore individuals' experiences, determine the stories that emerged from those experiences, look for major turning points within the narratives, and convey the narrative with thick descriptions.

Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space helped provide a framework for parceling out themes. With this approach, I examined the personal and social realms (i.e., interactional themes), the past, present, and future (i.e.,

themes of continuity), and the place (i.e., situational themes) in a multidimensional manner. “This framework allows our inquiries to travel—inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 49). Inward movement allows for affective reaction and reflection while outward movement positions these reactions in context. Meanwhile, backward, forward, and situated movement allows for continuity (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

With the transcripts and other data, I went through the narrative deconstructive process of “restorying” (Creswell, 2007, p. 56). When restorying, narratives were examined chronologically and scoured for non-theoretical, attachment, and resiliency-relevant themes while maintaining relevant contextual details such as time, place, plot, and scene, and counter-narrative elements in mind. Triangulation (Denzin, 1970) was used to integrate data throughout the analysis and narrative construction process. In this investigation, triangulation involved using, comparing, and contrasting multiple sources of data (i.e., interviews, photographs, field texts, observations of the site, participant encounters, and participants’ nonverbal behavior). The triangulation process helped paint a more reliable picture of themes within and across participant narratives by having highlighted moments of alignment or discordance between verbal description and behavior as well as between various methods of gathering data. Triangulation involved the weaving of empirical data, participants’ words, symbols, and metaphors, stories and meanings, and field texts in an overall effort of narrative co-construction and representation. Again, the emphasis was on collaboration wherein most participants actively filled in gaps in their narratives by looking at similarities, contradictions, and ambiguities (Bergeron, 2008; Etherington & Bridges, 2011).

In narrative inquiry, the researcher can focus on particular phenomenon or themes across narratives or can focus more holistically on individual narratives themselves (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In this narrative inquiry, my primary goal was to understand the individual, contextualized narratives first and then look at thematic overlap. While it was difficult to generalize across narratives, cross-narrative analysis (Merriam, 1998) was conducted to explore common or overlapping themes across cases. These comparisons looked at “separate but similar studies ex post facto...this method highlights both the uniqueness and the commonality of participants’ experiences and allows us to understand each study more fully” (West & Oldfather, 1995, p. 454). Based on the process of have looked across narratives for moments of thematic resonance and discordance, tentative assertions were drawn as to the overall relevance of attachment and resiliency theory in relation to the participants’ narratives, especially as it related to the emergence of counter-narrative threads.

Researcher’s Stance

My identity and background as a researcher was of interest given my prominent role as research instrument (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research is marked by a flexible, evolving, and emergent design wherein fundamentally interpretive inquiry requires the researcher to reflect on his/her role and possible biases, the role of the reader, and the role of the participants in shaping the study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). What follows is a preliminary reflection on my identity and research background as it related to my research.

Description of the Researcher

My approach to research, particular research interests, and the specific skills I use in clinical work as a counselor-in-training are all interrelated despite their seemingly disparate nature. For instance, I regularly draw from my counseling skills for forming relationships, gathering information, connecting themes, recognizing the idiographic influence of contextual and cultural factors, and adapting to situations' unfolding ethical and relational considerations. There is an inherent reciprocal influence between my research and practice skills and I value how each informs the other. Reflexivity (Lahman et al., 2011) or the ability to reflect on action, in action, and on the person of the researcher/therapist represents an important skill that has overlapping utility in my approach to counseling and research.

In research, reflexivity largely involves examining the intersectionality of one's own identity markers, participants' identity markers, and how they dynamically interact and have been shaped over time by systems of power and privilege (Johnson, 2006). Such processes can have a dynamic impact on the entirety of the research process. Thus, it was important for me to reflect on my own identity markers and the role of power and privilege as they intersected with participants' identity markers before I even entered the field as a researcher. In terms of my salient personal identity markers, I identify as a young adult Caucasian, able-bodied, heterosexual (and married), cisgender male (i.e., gender identity consistent with one assigned at birth; Smith, Shin, & Officer, 2012), a native English-speaking U.S. citizen, from a middle to upper-middle class, well-educated, Christian (more or less) background, and was raised in an intact (i.e., no deceased immediate family members and parents still married) family of six. Also relevant for my

work in research related to individuals who are homeless was my identity as a graduate student in the counseling psychology field as both a scientist and practitioner. This part of my identity was particularly interesting as my counseling psychology background helped with building rapport and facilitating interviews; yet I had to be careful with not conducting counseling with participants (Polkinghorne, 2005). As far as I can tell, being left-handed is the closest thing to a target identity marker I have (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997), and even that is more of a historically targeted identity marker, which is more of a unique as opposed to oppressed part of my identity in terms of my lived experience. My various identity markers locate me toward the upper extreme of the privileged, agentic identity markers continuum. Thus, I am generally considered to be coming from a privileged, outsider, and knower stance that had to be negotiated when developing rapport and working with participants and the shelter communities (Mertens, 2010; Smith, 2012).

My identity markers might have alienated or aroused suspicion/trust concerns for potential participants who were homeless. For example, my cisgender male identity could have made it difficult for female participants (or other genders depending on relational history) to relate to me, if at all, especially if their homelessness was connected to prior experiences of trauma and domestic violence. Additionally, my cultural and language encapsulation excluded large portions of the homeless population from examination (e.g., non-English speakers, immigrants, migrant workers, etc.). Even with similar citizenship and language backgrounds, my middle to upper-middle class and well-educated identity markers (Shpungin & Lyubansky, 2006), having never experienced homelessness or material want myself, might have alienated actual or prospective

participants. In general, the lens through which I view the world undoubtedly might have led to misrepresentation of lived experience (e.g., the power of language and its meaning for individuals being taken away with the subtle ways in which I transformed their narratives to better fit the academic environment of which I am a part).

My identities were particularly important when doing research on homelessness as I recognized my ability to leave the homeless shelter and return home to family at any given point in time. Relatedly, social class stigmatization had to be considered when building rapport, engaging with participants, and representing their voices. Additionally, my privileged identities likely contributed to me overlooking important considerations that could impact a participant's worldview, e.g., not explicitly considering the impact of visible or hidden disabilities as well as sexual orientation. Had I not made earnest efforts to demonstrate my multicultural competence, focus on relationship building, and convey empathy, many participants might have felt more oppressed and not empowered to bring up such matters.

Having demonstrated warmth and acceptance while being focused on the relationship and the empowerment of participants' voices through verbatim transcription and representation, I hoped to reduce my level of power in the research setting. I also attempted to reduce this power by acknowledging that despite my privileged identities, I could just as soon become homeless myself pending certain events or setbacks. By having spent a significant amount of time in the research setting historically, both as a researcher and as a volunteer, I also aspired to reduce my level of power and ascribed outsider status. Even still, I recognized certain individuals might have felt pressured to participate out of a sense of debt or obligation (e.g., wanting to prove themselves,

wanting to give back since I have volunteered at shelters in the past, feeling that I have some sort of authority over them, etc.). Thus, I was attuned to the potential for coercion during the process of participant recruitment, informed consent, and throughout the research process. Lastly, I attempted to minimize my level of power by checking in with participants' comfort level in exploring certain topic areas, regularly gave opportunities to break or not respond if need be, and viewed informed consent and reflexivity as ongoing, evolving processes.

Choice of Research Topic

During my life and my development as a counselor I have been passionate about matters of social justice. As a counselor with an interest in social justice, I recognize I have an intrinsic proclivity for reframing situations in an effort to draw upon inherent strengths. Although I tried to remain as objective as possible throughout the process of data gathering and analysis, I recognized my biases, or my etic issues (Stake, 1995), likely affected this process in some capacity. I refer to these matters later in the chapter with regard to my use of a reflexivity journal (Merriam, 1998) and process of engaging in bridling (Dahlberg, 2006).

In part, my privileged identities have allowed for social justice and developing a more empathic, strengths-based understanding of homelessness to become central values. By and large, my concern for the well-being and lived experience of individuals who are homeless has been fostered by my time spent working with a Street Outreach program through AmeriCorps, engaging in previous research, and volunteering at a local homeless shelter, all of which have granted me the privilege of working closely with individuals who experience homelessness. Personally, I am saddened by Fiske's (2010) findings that

disgust is the reaction evoked in response to individuals who are homeless. When considering my research area of interest of individuals and families who are homeless, I found critical theory and narrative inquiry approaches highly relevant. After all, individuals who are homeless are often relegated to displaced positions within communities (Harter et al., 2005) and stigmatized based on ascribed characteristics (Fiske et al., 2002), which are often perpetuated by individuals and sociocultural images (e.g., media portrayals). I have been further saddened and downright frustrated when I have overheard colleagues alluding to individuals who are homeless or homelessness in general in a stereotypic and non-empathic fashion. If anything, this further strengthened my belief in the need for this and similar types of research.

Berk (2011) defined resiliency as “the ability to adapt effectively in the face of threats to development” (p. 8). Based on this definition, I have never encountered a more resilient group of individuals than those I have had the privilege to interact with at a homeless shelter. As a result of previous undertakings, I found many shelter residents have had to withstand experiences of attachment threat and loss, a lack of empathic engagement and warmth, and myriad forms of abuse (Roche, 2012, 2013). Despite this, many of the participants who were involved in the studies, as well as residents whom I have interacted with on a more informal basis, continued to strive to improve their situation while espousing outlooks marked by hope and gratitude.

As Dickson-Swift et al. (2007) found among qualitative researchers who collaborated with participants on sensitive research, I too found it to be an extreme privilege to be allowed to listen to and explore their often-harrowing stories. Although this was an emotionally fatiguing process that required my careful attention to boundaries

and self-care, I found myself resonating more with the concept of vicarious resilience (Engstrom, Hernández, & Gangsei, 2008; Hernández, Gangsei, & Engstrom, 2007).

Stemming from the reflections of therapists who engage in trauma work, vicarious resilience points to the personal growth, sense of gratitude, and positive change in perspective that can emerge from empathically engaging and bearing witness to how others have constructively coped with myriad forms of adversity and trauma. My personal reflection has often brought up similar sentiments from my time spent with those who are homeless, further urging me to explore the process of resiliency among this diverse population.

Trustworthiness

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argued narrative inquiry does not fit neatly with traditional considerations of validity, reliability, and generalizability. However, Clandinin and Connelly did find narrative inquiry could resonate with the notion of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Morrow, 2005), which encompasses concepts of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability more broadly. Morrow (2005) likened trustworthiness to notions of research quality and rigor, which begins first with the researcher-as-instrument. As such, Morrow highlighted the need for reflexivity given the inherently subjective nature of narrative inquiry. With reflexivity (Morrow, 2005), I had to properly position myself in relation to the topic and the participants, capture my influence throughout the process of co-construction, and openly acknowledge and bridle (Dahlberg, 2006) personal and theoretical biases in the hopes my impact on the research process and results was mitigated. I also had to be able to find and utilize an up-to-date literature review while having constructed and drawn from a strong conceptual

framework and rationale viewed as socially valid or relevant (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Morrow, 2005). I have strived to demonstrate such factors throughout the entirety of the first three chapters of this investigation.

A reflexivity journal (Merriam, 1998) was maintained throughout the research process in an effort to position myself and maintain an awareness of and bridle (Dahlberg, 2006) my biases. Use of diligently taken field texts acted as a means of ensuring thick description and better, more nuanced recall, thereby having improved trustworthiness regarding what became represented as participant narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). These field notes also served the function of an audit trail (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) as methodological and procedural notes were taken regarding the process of meetings with shelter point persons, participant recruitment, data gathering, camera usage, and data analysis so others could verify my actions and better attempt to recreate a similar study.

Trustworthiness at a broader level is also concerned with the adequacy of the data (i.e., arriving at the point of saturation or redundancy; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1998) as well as the adequacy of interpretation based on the systematic meaning making principles or guidelines of one's chosen methodology (Morrow, 2005). Adequacy of data here not only concerned having a sufficient amount of evidence that was purposefully gathered but also having triangulated (Denzin, 1970) a variety of sources of evidence while having given ample consideration to disconfirming evidence and discrepant cases. Similarly, the adequacy of interpretation also involved the process of triangulation and the consideration of disconfirmatory evidence while having ensured adequate immersion in the data. Herein I have described how my in-depth involvement with multiple

participants at multiple locations using multiple methods while weighing out confirmatory and disconfirmatory thematic elements in prolonged intra- and cross-narrative data analysis helped ensure methodological rigor and trustworthiness.

Regarding the restorying process and the depiction of participant narratives, a major concern within narrative inquiry is the need to avoid representing narratives as causally connected based on researcher interpretation, especially when it is done solely on the basis of temporal ordering (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I did, however, honor explicit causal connections espoused by individual participants. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) expressed that member checking and peer checking are helpful means of ensuring the researcher remains mindful of ethical considerations, bias, and such matters as misinterpretation and misrepresentation. Peer checking (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) involved transparently reviewing my procedures for data collection, transcription, coding, triangulation, thematic analysis, restorying, and representation with a methodologically-informed counseling psychology doctoral student who had taken multiple courses in qualitative research methods in addition to feedback provided by my doctoral committee. Feedback from the peer review process led to greater awareness of: researcher bias, failure to capture disconfirmatory evidence, overgeneralized or forced theoretical/thematic analysis, ethical considerations with participant representation, and missed opportunities within narrative representation and thematic analysis. Ultimately, peer checking led to minor revisions of themes and the manner in which some participant narratives were portrayed. Peer procedural and narrative resonance added trustworthiness to the findings although the increased level of trustworthiness primarily stemmed from the process of subjecting this work to peer scrutiny.

Willing and available participants collaborated with me by validating the restored version of their narrative. This member check (Creswell, 2007) involved reading over what I compiled and synthesized on the basis of the triangulated data sources, reflexivity, and the restorying process. The compilation generated a vignette of the participants' narratives, which were reviewed collaboratively with the respective participants to ensure comprehension and ongoing informed consent. Subsequently, the participants were allowed to offer suggestions, clarify material, include addendums, or request certain material be withdrawn. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) observed narrative member checking is "something much more global and human: Is this you? Do you see yourself here? Is this the character you want to be when this is read by others?" (p. 148). This member check was a means of ensuring participants' voices were not smothered by my interpretation, power imbalances were managed, and the narratives resonated with all involved.

The member check was also part of a broader debriefing process that brought closure to the participants' involvement. As part of this process, participants commented on their experiences interacting with me and about the research process more broadly. The quality or rigor of a study that stems from giving consideration to matters of trustworthiness is essential not only because the researcher has supposedly engaged in a fiduciary, trusting encounter with participants but also because one has a relationship with the audience of readers and flawed information can cause harm (Haverkamp, 2005).

Credibility

Credibility is often compared with the notion of internal validity (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Merriam, 1995; Morrow, 2005)--one is concerned with whether he/she is

measuring or observing what he/she thinks he/she is. Merriam (1995) argued this depends on one's epistemology; when engaging in the act of co-construction through critical narrative inquiry, one must recognize that data are influenced by constructed, multidimensional, and ever-changing realities that are impacted by dominant narratives (Easton-Brooks, 2012; White & Epston, 1990) and a lifetime of experiences. I have described previously how I followed recommendations for improving credibility and rigor (Merriam, 1995; Morrow, 2005) including reflexivity regarding axiology or values in the research process and owning those up front; prolonged engagement with participants and submersion in their respective contexts; triangulation by use of multiple data sources, underlying theories, and methods; use of peer checking and member checking, all of which were in addition to presenting the narratives through use of thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973).

Dependability

Dependability is paralleled with the notion of reliability or consistency, such that there is a process of discovering that one's findings are explicit, consistent with the data collected, and repeatable (Merriam, 1995; Morrow, 2005). Yet one must not assume the represented narratives are objective and permanent in character. After all, "memory is selective, shaped, and retold in the continuum of one's experiences" and worldview (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 142) and human behavior is never static (Merriam, 1998). To improve the level of dependability in my design, I followed recommendations suggested by both Merriam (1995) and Morrow (2005) to incorporate the use of an audit trail, peer and member checking, and triangulation so narratives coalesced with the findings from multiple data sources.

Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the degree of objectivity of a supposedly distanced and neutral observer (Morrow, 2005). While I agreed with recommendations that one should attempt to minimize bias through systematic rigor of fieldwork procedures (i.e., detailed audit trail, field notes, thorough and honest reflexivity journal, and use of member checking) so one's findings are representative of the situation (Morrow, 2005), critical approaches to narrative inquiry are highly relational and colored by one's level of rapport, awareness of biases, and transparency in their process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lahman et al., 2011). As such, I intentionally chose to use first-person voice throughout this investigation (Paradis, 2000).

Transferability

A comparison is often drawn between external validity or generalizability and transferability (Merriam, 1995; Morrow, 2005) such that a reader is interested in knowing whether or not the findings are applicable to other situations, participants, and contexts based on verisimilitude and similarities. Morrow (2005) stated that to allow for transferability, the researcher must provide sufficient information regarding the following: self (i.e., researcher as instrument), setting, process and procedures, participants, and the nature and quality of participant-researcher relationships so one's investigation and findings are effectively contextualized. The potential for transferability was also enhanced through use of thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) and having utilized a multi-site design (Merriam, 1998).

With narrative inquiry, one cannot extrapolate or generalize in a statistical sense (Merriam, 1995). Quantitative methods frequently focus on mean or modal scores,

consider confidence intervals, and ignore outliers; mean scores often do not apply to the unique case of the individual participant. Thus, my goal in this investigation was to understand the particular of participants' life narratives in an in-depth manner. Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (1994) felt strongly that the researcher should not be the one to draw generalizations or suggest transferability; they acknowledged danger in overgeneralizing conclusions from a limited number of participant narratives for both the reader and the researcher. Within this narrative inquiry, transferability and generalizability of cross-narrative thematic analysis came secondary to portraying the depth and richness of individual contextualized narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). When it comes to transferability, the reader must decide if a fit exists and whether extrapolation can occur (Merriam, 1995). With post-modernist thought and Denzin's (1989) notion of interpretive interactionism where the general lies in the particular and everyone is considered to be a universal singular, such a possibility certainly exists.

Ethical Considerations

In an investigation of this nature, ethical considerations and dilemmas abound. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) observed several ethical dilemmas that commonly emerge within narrative inquiry. First, Clandinin and Connelly discussed the evolving nature of qualitative research and the subsequent evolution of possible ethical dilemmas. Another common concern was that of anonymity and confidentiality. Given the depth and vulnerability inherent in narrative exploration and presentation, anonymity could not be assured (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Concerns regarding the lack of anonymity were addressed as part of the ongoing process of informed consent. Key times where consent was revisited often included when participants were transitioning to subsequent

interviews, engaging in the member checking process, and during debriefing. Another set of ethical dilemmas was related to narrative ownership, distinguishing fact from fiction, and avoiding narrative smoothing (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Member checking and peer checking processes were put in place to help address these concerns.

Haverkamp (2005) mentioned broadly that if one's methodological procedures reflected ethical choices, then they likely fulfilled primary ethical obligations in their investigation. Haverkamp also argued that the research process required constant ethical reflection on one's actions and responses as well as the ability to engage in the research process in a competent manner through proper application of one's methodological, multicultural, and counseling knowledge. By counseling knowledge, I alluded to how I responded to and anticipated potential distress, thus my inclusion and discussion of mental health resources with participants (see Appendix J). The aspirational ethic of beneficence considered the need for anticipated benefits of participation to outweigh potential risks although Haverkamp argued this was not complete enough of an idea. Thus, while I incorporated consideration of participant remuneration, I had to also navigate unfolding risks to participants proactively and as they arose in balance with possible secondary gains such as notions like empowerment, access to knowledge, and community change.

To maintain awareness of matters of ethical decision-making, I maintained a reflexivity journal and audit trail (Merriam, 1998) throughout the process and bore culturally responsive relational reflexive ethics in mind (Lahman et al., 2011). As such, dilemmas were viewed proactively, reflexively, relationally, consistently, and through consultation. Ethical considerations that emerged were related to the areas of:

confidentiality or how much information was too much, how to protect identities while staying true to the narrative, how to represent participants' voices or who owned the narrative, how to balance respect for autonomy with limits of confidentiality, how to consider participants' rights to not know about parts of their lives, how to minimize researcher-participant power differentials, and how to avoid multiples roles and relationships, especially in light of my personal background as a counselor (Barnett, 2012; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Fischer, 2012; Fisher, 2008; Haverkamp, 2005; Lahman et al., 2011; Paradis, 2000; Sieck, 2012).

Several colleagues and I recently put forth several ethical assertions for conducting research with participants who are homeless (Lahman et al., 2013). In light of these myriad ethical considerations, I worked to anticipate ethical matters proactively and engaged in reflective practice in order to respond effectively to iterative and unfolding dilemmas while holding myself accountable. For matters related to confidentiality and consent, I offered participants the option of participant-selected pseudonyms (Fitzgerald & Hamilton, 1996) and witnessed consent for protecting confidentiality should they find it necessary while remaining cognizant of the need for plain language within consent (e.g., using language such as “aware of” or “has thought about” instead of “cognizant”; Jefford & Moore, 2008). Haverkamp (2005) stated participants should be informed of reasonably foreseeable factors that might influence their participation decision, such as the exceptions to confidentiality and the potential for topic veering in unstructured interviews, while viewing informed consent as an ongoing process.

Negotiating boundaries and multiple relationships can be a challenging process considering the strong levels of rapport, high degree of disclosure, and potential in-depth level of emotional processing that can at times lead to role diffusion, ambiguous expectations, and the need to be wary of inappropriate exercise of power and influence (Haverkamp, 2005). While narrative inquiry is highly relational and not aspiring toward objectivity, I had to weigh the potential for exploitation, participants' rights to *not* know something about themselves, and the need to not blur the process of narrative recall and co-construction with counseling (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Haverkamp, 2005). Dickson-Swift et al. (2007) pointed to the need of considering relationship boundaries, fielding difficult emotions, and tactfully entering and exiting the research environment. As such, I bore in mind I was engaging with participants who were in the midst of a stressful life period and treated them with the utmost respect and appreciation.

With regard to representation, I maintained the stance that person first language (Blaska, 1993) and relationally responsive member checking (Lahman et al., 2011; Merriam, 1998) should inform representation. When it came to representation, confidentiality remained a relevant consideration as the use of extensive participant quotes, high levels of detail, and contextualized specificity made protecting identity difficult for both the participants as well as third parties. In effect, I wanted to protect participants and third parties without undermining integrity of data (Barnett, 2012; Fischer, 2012; Sieck, 2012). Thus, I incorporated pseudonym use, allowed for potential witnessed consent, and provided explicit instructions in the photo-elicitation portion (see Appendix G) for protecting confidentiality. Within research of this nature, the notion of

process responsiveness (Lahman et al., 2011) was also relevant wherein I consistently checked with participants to gauge comfort and capability throughout the process.

With regard to conducting research with those who are homeless, Paradis (2000) argued for an ethical awareness surrounding one's "accountability to the community being studied, the limits of my ability to interpret the data, the contributions of my own experience, and the potential for perpetuating stereotypes" (p. 845). I attempted to attend to such concerns by giving back to the community being studied through volunteerism and sharing my research findings, making assertions tentative, maintaining a reflexivity journal, incorporating participant quotes, giving an explicit focus to strengths within counter-narratives that challenged dominant narratives surrounding homelessness, and valuing participants' voices throughout the process of narrative co-construction.

Conclusion

Beginning with the rationale for this investigation regarding the need for more nuanced, personal, and contextualized counter-narratives (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) to be afforded the space to emerge and challenge dominant narratives around stereotyped depictions of homelessness (Easton-Brooks, 2012; White & Epston, 1990), this chapter laid out the underlying epistemological and theoretical considerations that influenced this narrative inquiry. By having co-constructed participant narratives through the use of both theoretically guided and participant-driven methods (i.e., structured interviews, photo-elicitation construction, and use of observations and field texts), this dissertation attended to how possible attachment and resiliency themes emerged and interacted across time and context to inform participants' present outlook and positionality. While recognizing this narrative inquiry was an unfolding and iterative

process, I laid out the procedures surrounding the collection of multiple participant narratives from varying locales, how those data were collected and analyzed in accordance with the narrative inquiry methodology, and demonstrated how by attending to general procedures of qualitative rigor and ethical considerations, I enhanced the inherent trustworthiness of this dissertation. I end this chapter with a quote from Clandinin and Connelly (2000) that resonates with my critical paradigm epistemology and values of social justice values that wove their way throughout this design. For neither other researchers nor I nor the act of research itself is a passive act or separate from our field of inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000): “On the contrary, we are complicit in the world we study. Being in this world, we need to remake ourselves as well as offer up research understandings that could lead to a better world” (p. 61).

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

Introduction

In-depth narratives were gathered from 13 adults who were currently homeless and residing in one of two transitional homeless shelters in the Rocky Mountain region (i.e., seven at one shelter and six at the other). The intent of this critical narrative study was to gather narratives for the purpose of exploring the degree and manner in which the cumulative, subjective impact that one's childhood and adult attachment history, individual and systemic risk/protective factors history, and perceived relationship to their community had on the outlook of adults who were currently experiencing some level of homelessness. While more than 13 potential participants who would have met criteria for participation had expressed interest in being a part of the study, saturation regarding thematic elements of attachment and resiliency was reached prior the 13th interview; thus, no additional narratives were gathered to avoid redundancy (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1998; Morrow, 2005). Additional narratives beyond the point of saturation were gathered for the purpose of enhancing maximum variation (Merriam, 1998). A summary of participants' demographic information is provided in Table 2. Although the intent had been to recruit primarily first-time and episodically homeless participants, the final participant pool included a few individuals who had been homeless on a more chronic basis as well. All but a few names of participants were changed to pseudonyms

per those individuals' request prior to the start of the audio-recorded portion of the research process.

Table 2

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity/ Race	Highest Level of Education	Employment Status	Relational Status	Number of Homeless Episodes	Length of Current Episode	Total Time Homeless
Kay*	58	Female	White	High school, Some college classes	Unemployed	Single, Divorced	1	2 weeks	2 weeks
Spencer**	26	Male	White	Some college classes	Full-time	Single, Divorced	1	2 months	2 months
Scooter*	36	Male	White	GED, 1 year of college	Unemployed	Single	25	6 months	14 years
DeBroncos*	49	Male	White	Associate's Degree	Unemployed	Single	2	1.5 years	4 years
Jade**	34	Female	White, Choctaw, German	GED, 1.5 years of college	Part-time	Married,	1	1.5 months	1.5 months
Christina*	41	Female	Multi-racial (French, Sioux, Spanish, Mexican)	7 th grade	Unemployed	Dating	4 or 5	5-6 months	4 years (approx.)
Cancerman**	49	Male	White	10 th grade	Social Security Disability Insurance	Single	1	1 month	1 month
Black**	31	Male	Hispanic	GED	Full-time	Married	3	4 months	1 year
B.P.*	40	Male	Jewish, White	High school, Some college classes	Social Security Disability Insurance	Single	4	16 months	10 years
Blue**	50	Female	White	GED, 1 year of college	Unemployed	Single	5	9 months	3-4 years
James**	44	Male	Spanish, Mayan, White	2.5 years of college	Part-time	Single	2	5 months	7 months
Vernon**	49	Male	White	Bachelor's Degree	Unemployed	Single	1	1 year	1 year
Snickers*	51	Female	White	3 years of college	Full-time	Single	2	4 weeks	5 months

*Participant was residing in urban shelter.

**Participant was residing in rural shelter.

The primary research questions I sought to explore through this investigation, from which follow-up inquiries stemmed, included the following:

Q1 How does the reciprocal influence between perceived context and the individual play out across the lifespan in light of possible:

Q1a Attachment and

Q1b Resiliency themes?

As mentioned in the methodological section of Chapter III, triangulation (Denzin, 1970) of multiple data sources was used to thicken narrative descriptions, bridle researcher biases, and increase trustworthiness through the process of data analysis. Demographic questionnaires, verbatim transcripts from structured interviews, participant-driven photo-elicitation projects, photographs, field texts, observational data from prolonged setting and participant engagement, and in-interview generated timelines were included in the process of data analysis. Participant quotes and significant statements formed the primary basis for representation of their restoried narratives. Through use of specific language, I also attempted to indicate where potential assumptions or researcher interpretation was used as the basis for statements or claims. Following the restorying process of narrative construction, all participants were invited to participate in a member-checking process that involved collaborative review of restoried narratives and intra-narrative emergent themes.

The member check process was designed to ensure accurate and resonant portrayal of their narratives, balance power, and debrief from the interview process overall. Seven of the 13 participants took part in the member-checking phase of the research process, verifying the accuracy and resonance of their narrative portrayal and intra-narrative themes while providing minor content-based or interpretive revisions.

While all but one participant expressed interest in participating in the member-check process, the other six participants remained lost at follow-up. Time lags in the data analysis process, changes in life circumstances, mental health concerns, and the seemingly avoidant attachment dynamics of a handful of these unaccounted for participants offer potential explanations for the absence of follow-up. Trustworthiness was further enhanced through use of peer-checking (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) with a methodologically-informed counseling psychology doctoral student who had taken multiple courses in qualitative research methods. The peer-checking process involved both independent and collaborative review of my procedures for data collection, transcription, coding, triangulation, restoried narratives, thematic analysis, and representation.

Table 3 provides a snapshot of the primary precursive and sustaining factors contributing to participants' homelessness found in this study. Tables 4 and 5 further specify the nature of each participant's adverse childhood experiences and relational disruptions. Cross-narrative analysis branches off from Table 3 in the next section. While participant narratives as a whole are stand-alone results for revealing stereotype-challenging counter-narrative elements (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010), cross-narrative analysis is presented to explore commonalities of themes related to attachment, resiliency, and context across participants.

Table 3

Factors Related and Contributing to Homelessness

Participant	Adverse Childhood Experiences*	Relational Disruption**	Other Mental Health Concerns***	Juvenile Justice Involvement	Jail/ Prison Time	Substance Use History	Disability/ Health Concerns	Recent Job Loss
Kay	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Spencer	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Scooter	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
DeBroncos	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Jade	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Christina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cancerman	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Black	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B.P.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Blue	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
James	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Vernon	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Snickers	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

* Including but not limited to physical, sexual or emotional abuse; neglect; witnessing domestic violence; parental mental health and/or substance use concerns; and/or harassment.

** Indicates presence of divorce/end of significant relationship; relationship violence; death of parent/caregiver; estrangement of parent or child; and/or complicated bereavement.

*** Self-reported by participants.

Table 4

Participants' Adverse Childhood Experiences

Participant	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Neglect	Witnessing Domestic Violence	Caregiver Substance Use/ Mental Health Concerns	Other Maladaptive Parenting Behaviors	Harassment by Peers
Kay	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Alcoholism	Critical; Controlling; Isolating	Verbal
Spencer	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Alcoholism	Critical; Sibling Comparison	Verbal; Physical
Scooter	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Unknown	Rejecting	Physical
DeBroncos	Unknown	No	No	Yes	No	Unknown	Critical; Controlling	Unknown
Jade	Unknown	No	Yes	Yes	Unknown	Substance Use	Critical; Controlling	Unknown
Christina	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unknown	Substance Use	Critical; Controlling; Sibling Comparison	Unknown
Cancerman	No	No	No	No	No	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Black	No	No	No	Yes	Unknown	Substance Use; Possible Mental Health Concerns	Permissive	Unknown
B.P.	Yes	Possible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Substance Use	Rejecting	Verbal; Physical
Blue	Yes	Possible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possible Mental Health Concerns	Critical; Controlling	Unknown
James	No	No	Unknown	No	Unknown	Unknown	Critical; Controlling	Unknown
Vernon	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Possible Mental Health Concerns	Critical; Controlling; Sibling Comparison	Unknown
Snickers	No	No	No	No	No	No	Possibly Demanding	Unknown

Table 5

Participants' Relational Disruptions

Participant	Parental Divorce/ Separation	Estrangement of Parent(s)	Death of Parent(s)/ Caregiver(s)	Complicated Bereavement	Estrangement of Other Family Member(s)	Intimate Partner Violence	Divorce/ End of Significant Relationship	Current Relational Attachments
Kay	Divorce (late adolescence)	Both parents (adulthood)	No	No	Children (adulthood); Siblings (adulthood)	Unknown	Multiple divorces	Limited
Spencer	No	Both parents (adulthood)	No	No	Siblings (adulthood)	Unknown	Divorce	Rebuilding
Scooter	Separated (infancy)	Biological parents (infancy)	Grandparents (adolescence); Mother (adulthood)	Yes	No	No	End of significant relationship	Absent
DeBroncos	Divorce (early childhood)	Father (early childhood)	Grandfather (early adolescence); Grandmother and parents (adulthood)	Yes	Siblings (adulthood)	No	End of significant relationship	Absent
Jade	Divorce (early childhood)	Father (early childhood)	No	No	Husband and children (adulthood)	No	End of significant relationship	Rebuilding
Christina	Divorce (early childhood)	Both parents (adolescence)	Mother (early adulthood)	Yes	Siblings (adulthood)	Unknown	Unknown	Limited
Cancerman	No	No	Both parents (adulthood)	Possible	Siblings (adulthood)	No	End of significant relationship	Absent
Black	Separation (infancy)	Father (infancy)	No	No	Child (adulthood)	No	No	Limited
B.P.	Divorce (early childhood)	Father (early childhood); Mother (adulthood)	No	No	No	No	No	Absent
Blue	Divorce (early childhood; adulthood)	Father (early childhood); Mother and Stepfather (adulthood)	Grandfather (early adulthood)	No	Children (adulthood)	Yes	Multiple divorces	Rebuilding
James	Separation (infancy)	Biological father (infancy); Adoptive parents (adulthood)	Mother (early childhood); Adoptive father (adulthood)	Possible	Adoptive siblings (adulthood)	No	End of significant relationship	Rebuilding
Vernon	Divorce (early adolescence)	No	Mother (adulthood)	Possible	Children (adulthood)	No	Divorce	Absent
Snickers	No	No	Both parents (adulthood)	Possible	No	No	Unknown	Strong

By maintaining a reflexivity journal during the research process, I was able to document my thoughts, impressions, biases, emotional reactions, and the overarching influence of the research process on me. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) spoke to the importance of positioning the researcher within the research process; thus, my own reflections are presented as well. While not all participants commented during their initial interview or participated in the member-check process, I was also able to provide information around the impact of their involvement on a fair number of the participants. Lastly, a brief discussion around the findings from both the member and peer checking process is put forth.

Within-Narrative Analysis

Kay

Kay is a 58-year-old Caucasian woman who completed high school early to escape from an abusive, alcoholic household in addition to having taken some college courses. Kay was in the midst of her first episode of being housing challenged, having gone to the shelter directly after losing her housing; she had been there for about two weeks when I started interacting with her. The use of the phrase “housing challenged” was intentional as Kay expressed dislike for the word “homeless” as she felt it inaccurately represented her situation and was marked with stigma. In her words, “It’s very uh, profile-labeling term.... Well, you know, you gotta be a loser to be homeless; I don’t consider myself a loser. I consider myself housing challenged.” While unemployed at the time of the interview, having lost her long-time job in the mortgage business after the collapse of the housing market, Kay had recently held a job at a drugstore and was actively seeking employment. When I first began speaking with Kay,

I noticed her fiery spirit and friendly demeanor; she had an undeniable spark of individual hardiness that was likely forged through years of hardship. Yet I found as I worked with Kay, underneath her determined exterior was a softer, humbled side she initially tried to mask with nervous laughter and by focusing more on her daughter; she was not used to opening up and showing a more vulnerable side to others.

It's "not normal" to be beat every day. Kay grew up in the South in an affluent household marked by alcoholism, physical abuse, and neglect: "Whether it was verbal or physical, it was a daily, daily nightmare." She was the middle child with an older and younger sister although for various reasons, they were never particularly close with one another. As Kay put it, "There was never any, it's not like we were protecting each other or huddling each other." Kay recalled an awakening moment in kindergarten when "I was finally exposed to other children and found out it wasn't normal to be beat every day."

Yet due to her parents' affluent background, church-going appearances, and the relative culture of silence that permeated her region at the time, Kay endured years of abuse largely unchecked and unnoticed. As she put it, "I think my innocence, like glass-shattering, I can still remember that moment so vividly." She noted she must have felt "less" about herself as she was always trying to find ways to feel better about herself while growing up. Kay excelled in academic and extracurricular pursuits, all in an effort to fill a void in her heart and find some sort of sense of purpose and belonging.

The straw that broke the camel's back. While Kay's narrative of her childhood predominately revolved around adverse childhood experiences and ongoing efforts to navigate her family environment, she noted she had some protective relationships over

the years that helped her along the way. She described her grandmother as someone who was sweet to her and made her feel special although she also colluded with the abuse through her silence. A primary school teacher and piano instructor served protective roles; Kay relayed they provided her the space to have her feelings validated and the sense she was a worthwhile person: “I don’t know what I would’ve done but I had that valve, that relief.... We sat down and talked the entire time. My mother, they were paying for therapy, not piano lessons.” Like her grandmother, both of these individuals could not fully counteract the influence of her context and similarly colluded with her abusive situation by not providing more direct assistance.

Despite the presence of some protective factors, the years of stress and abuse began to take their toll on Kay, which showed up in various ways. As Kay described it, she “cracked” from the unhappiness and stress of her abusive household. At one point, she was hospitalized after she had refused to eat. Kay recalled with irritated laughter,

Of course nobody ever admitted how I got there. I never took drugs, I was a straight-A student, always looking to achieve and accomplish, you know, to get somebody’s love or attention.... well I snapped out of that real quick! You’re not keeping me here! Bring me some food, I’m over it! No help here! Nobody’s going to hear me.

While the intervention was brief, it ultimately contributed to Kay going off to boarding school. Kay drew from her strengths and talents to push herself toward success: “Honor Roll, the whole nine yards, succeeded, crashed it! Went through two years of school in one.... I was on my own.... Had a little apartment that was bug infested, no TV, no radio, nothing! But it was peaceful!” Not only did this enable Kay to put her hard work ethic to use by graduating high school early and obtaining her first job, it also allowed her to get away from her parents: “The only way to get out of there ...I had to live with one

of those nuts until I had a high school diploma. So as soon as I figured out how to get that, I was non-stop.” At around the same time, another saving grace was her parents got a divorce, an outcome she had “prayed for.”

Relational losses and “train wrecks.” In a further effort to escape the negative influence of home, Kay entered a short-lived marriage as a young adult. Although divorced within three years, Kay managed to complete some college courses, start her career in the mortgage business (which would last well over 20 years), and had her first son by that point in time. Kay’s grandmother died of cancer during this time period as well. Having already lost touch with her former teacher and piano instructor, the death of her grandmother in some ways marked the start of Kay slowly closing off to the world.

Kay ended up getting pregnant out-of-wedlock and had her second son in her mid-20s. As this represented another failed relationship for Kay, which stood in contrast to the perceived success of her sisters’ romantic relationships, her relationships with her sisters became more distanced as a result. Recalling her sisters’ successful marriages, Kay relayed, “She hit the jackpot. So I’m the black sheep. I’m the only one that never could make those relationships work.” This was in addition to the sisters all coping with the aftermath of an alcoholic and abusive household in their separate ways: “I just took off. I was gone.... Had my second son in a hospital room all by myself, all alone. Totally alone. No one came to see about me, no one, even though I was right there home town.” As Kay put it, “So, we all went our different directions and so splintered, just so splintered emotionally, everything.”

While never fully explored with Kay, she also had become estranged from her two sons, which appeared to represent a great hardship for her. When the topic of her

sons initially came up, Kay became emotional and struggled to find her words: “But um, uh, I don’t even know what I was going to say. I was somewhere with that. Emotions got the better of me.” As a result of various failed relationships and negative relational decisions, Kay experienced a lot of shame around this:

What was, all I remember is the terror and the fear, you know? And, but yet I was always the A-student, the achiever, and neither of my sisters graduated from high school and ended up with killer husbands. What the f___? What is wrong with me? I felt more bad about myself after I was an adult because I kept making all the bad, wrong decisions, you know, in relationships.

She increasingly kept her distance but she also said she was saved through faith.

Tearfully, she relayed,

I know it’s, it’s, it’s my shame. It’s not how I feel, it’s more of my shame. Why I won’t let anyone get close to me. I don’t want to talk about me. I don’t want to tell you I’m a train wreck. I don’t want you to know that I’m a train wreck, you know? That’s what I meant. I won’t, it’s my faith, that’s the only thing; He loved me so much that He died for me. So, that’s what, I don’t want to disappoint. That’s my, my goal, and that these things come in our lives to build us and to make us better people.

In her early thirties, Kay married a man she met through church whom she thought she could trust. Kay referred to this man as the “sperm donor” for their daughter as he ultimately turned out to be dishonest, drug-addicted, and a negative influence Kay wanted to escape; she had already endured enough time surrounded by those whose lives were ruined by substance abuse.

Staying afloat. Kay went “underground” to escape her drug-addicted husband and keep her daughter free from his influence. As always, Kay did what it took to survive and stay afloat though this time was different; she had her daughter to look after: “Went under, literally went underground. I would have a relationship with someone and live with them, um, so utility bills, phone bills, rent, nothing was in my name.” And so

Kay bounced between various communities and relationships to make it and support her daughter. After all, she was a determined, hard worker who would keep moving past any relationship or roadblock to make sure her daughter did not lack. Although challenging, this seemed to be a point of pride for Kay: “The one thing I can say is, I, I’ve never asked for help for anything in my life. I raised my daughter completely by myself. No child support, no nothing, zero help. Family or anyone.”

Blocking out the rest of the world. Kay’s relational history had left her jaded, cynical, and desirous of the peace and quiet of solitude. After various failed relationships, Kay decided to cut herself off from the dating world in her mid-40s to be there solely for daughter and worked hard to break the cycle of abuse she had endured in her own childhood: “I never had a hand raised to her because I wanted to break that cycle *so much*. Never raised a hand on the other two either, but um, so I so much wanted that cycle broken.” While she knew she had provided for her daughter, she came to realize she was not as available to her daughter emotionally and worked hard to change this dynamic: “She was the moon and the sun. I lived for her. You know, the shopping, the cooking, the doing the nails, the long talks in the night.... All the boyfriends, and the, all the drama of the girls.”

By that point, she had grown increasingly weary of the energy it took to invest in any sort of adult relationship. Kay essentially ‘faked it until she made it’ through the workday before retreating to the privacy of her own home where she could block out the rest of the world. So for the better part of the past decade, Kay lived and breathed solely for her daughter and the “four-legged soul mate” she found in her canine companion. These relationships brought her joy and a sense of purpose in life. Her relationship with

her daughter helped her cope with the lack of relationship with her sons and estranged relations with her family of origin. With her own immediate family, Kay was partly abandoned, partly fleeing to escape the myriad forms of abuse and partly keeping a healthy emotional distance for herself. As Kay put it,

I divorced both of them just for my mental health. I don't want to hear their voice, I don't wanna know anything. I just completely divorced them, and that's the only way I could get, in my mind, you know, move past all that abuse. Um, couldn't forgive 'em, so I had to forget 'em.

Kay only came to realize how alone and closed off to the world she had become when her daughter left home for college: "I didn't want her to go! And I was being so selfish. Because I didn't know how I was going to survive it because I had cut myself off so much." And yet that was where Kay found herself:

All of a sudden there I was, empty nest, all alone, I hadn't, I hadn't dated in 12 years, uh, after that last one you know I went, "Oh, Lord!" I obviously had absolutely no role models, no way to form a relationship, no skills to know what's good or bad for me.

This lack of connection and poor relational self-efficacy became all the more apparent to Kay when she found herself housing challenged.

This is not to say Kay lacked for any positive attachment history entirely. Kay had known positive relationships over the years among her grandmother, piano instructor, grade school teacher, and her own daughter. Thus, Kay seemed to have a sense she had the capacity to establish meaningful connections with others. But at the same time, she was afraid of getting hurt again. As Kay recalled,

I so closed myself off from the world. I don't even have friends now. I just, I don't. I don't want any, if you can't get close to me, then you can't hurt me. So that's really what I'm trying to work on, is to heal and forgiveness right now. Because it's very lonely there.

So Kay found herself a woman torn, both wanting to be less lonely and open up more with others while struggling to know how to trust or enjoy herself in relationships.

The terrifying fall. The combination of Kay's interpersonal isolation, strained relationship with her daughter, and the closure of the mortgage business where she worked provided the perfect storm that contributed to Kay's eventual housing challenged state. Kay did take some accountability for her circumstance as she acknowledged she had been in denial around how the changes in the housing market might impact her job security and owned that her longevity in the field had left her qualifications somewhat lacking. She avoided wholly internalizing her housing challenges, noting she had been powerless and "screwed" by the corporate system for which she worked. In fact, Kay relayed she and her former co-workers were currently filing a lawsuit against their former employers.

Yet Kay had spent so much of her life working hard to just make it by keeping her and her daughter afloat without any true support. As Kay put it, "I had no cushion. I just fell flat! Crashed up against the rocks." This also left Kay having to confront the fact that she had left herself "so isolated there was no one to fall back on." Kay's transition from employed to housing challenged was not immediate; after all, Kay had been a fighter her whole life. But her circumstances eventually caught up to her:

And there I was. Couldn't pay my rent, couldn't pay my bills. And I got some little mindless job at a drugstore, and was living with a friend up to two weeks ago. I was paying her, you know, rent.... And then her lease was up, and she wanted to uh, move somewhere else. And, um, and here I am!

Kay's job loss and financial/housing circumstances impacted her in more ways than one; indeed, the stress and shock entailed with her becoming housing challenged was temporarily disabling for her. As Kay recalled, "I mean the fear was just, I couldn't eat, I

couldn't sleep. All I did was stress." Kay was also deeply hurt by how her daughter had distanced herself from Kay and held her housing challenged circumstances over her head:

And I think that's forever damaged us, you know, because I'll never forget this. I will never forget that uh, the way she's held that over my head, you know? Or made me feel, you know, not welcome or embarrassed, or ashamed of me. So, I don't know. But I don't even want to go there because the end of that story hasn't been written. I just want to be a phoenix, I just want to rise out of the ashes and say, "You doubted me!"

It was only recently that Kay came to realize how she had also been distancing herself from her daughter the whole time as well. She recalled painfully, "This is my one love of my life and I've managed to alienate her!"

These matters also took an emotional toll on Kay and her sense of identity:

"Maybe it's just because I'm so down on myself a little bit. You know, my pride and my ego and things are a little bruised right now." Through all of this, one of the hardest things for Kay was the fact she had come to the point where she had to admit to herself that she was in need of help: "Not in my whole life ever, it never entered my brain to ask for help. I'll work three jobs before I ask for help. But this forced me, I mean I literally did not have a job and nowhere to live, the exact time her lease was up and she's moving away."

A "soft place to land." Describing her capacity for perseverance, Kay relayed,

I've always been so tough, and so strong, and self-willed, and positive actually, uh, nothing would get me down. Nothing's gonna stop me, you throw up a road block and I'll go around, and I'll go under, and I'll go over it. And uh, and that's exactly what I've done now. So, there's really nothing new under that sun, just a different route. I think I went around the mountain a couple times, but the door was always there. Missed the door going so fast worried, trapped in fear and doubt.

Kay's path to finding herself at the transitional shelter was not an easy one, though a path she persevered upon nonetheless. Her entrance into the shelter was a humbling

experience as her previous style of self-reliance had been forged through years of hardship and enduring negative relationships had to be given up: “I don’t know if I needed humility, I don’t know what the Lord is working in me. Everybody needs a dose of humility for sure; sometimes more than once in a lifetime.” Finding the humility to ask for help required Kay to lean on her spirituality as she said she had to “just turn it over to the Lord. I know a lot of people say that and it sounds frivolous. But for me it was head down, knee bending, wrenching, you know?” Indeed, Kay’s spirituality provided her strength, support, a sense of being loved, and perspective she often lacked in other arenas. Her beliefs also helped her arrive at a point of wanting peace, valuing forgiveness, and striving for a simpler life wherein she could give back to those who had helped her.

Once there, Kay found the shelter to be a “soft place to land” that stood in contrast to the terror of her childhood and instability of the past year:

I’ll never, ever forget this. I lay my head down at night and I know I’m safe, and nobody’s going to evict me, or shut off the electricity, or the phone ... it’s like being uh, if I had ever experienced this, which I hadn’t but I read enough books, of living at home. You know, that, that, safety of home.... So I’ve never known that. I have never known that, ever.

For Kay, this type of environment and support was well suited to her needs as she relayed, “I’m not looking for goals, and riches, and fame, I just want to be at peace.” Kay repeatedly expressed her gratitude for the shelter, her awe at the resources afforded to her, and her appreciation for the kindness of the staff: “I just can’t say enough for this haven.” However, Kay’s awe and gratitude extended beyond the immediate environment of the shelter: “I just think it’s, that there’s help out there. There’s all these wonderful, wonderful people who do care. So I just, it just touched me.” She had come to discover

there were others in the community who wanted to give, especially for those who chose to seek help (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Kay photo 1.

The majority of the pictures Kay took in her photo-elicitation project were intended to capture her experience of being housing challenged, namely regarding her amazement at the supports available to those who are open to receiving help such as a nearby resource for women who are homeless (see Figure 3).

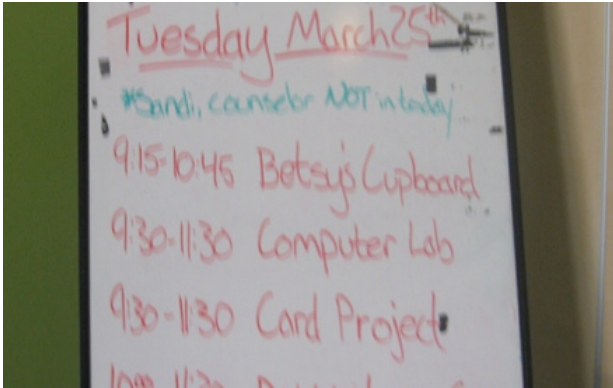


Figure 3. Kay photo 2.

As she put it,

If you want to lay in a ditch with the dirt and the drugs and all that, have at it! But if you don't, homeless isn't the worst thing, there's people out there to help. That's all. The thing I feared the most has come upon me, and I had no idea that it really wasn't anything to be afraid of.

In general, the resources and supports Kay accessed allowed her to ground herself once more in her inner reserves of strength and aspire to give back some day:

So, this has been very, very healing for me, to get back on my feet. To, to the way I perceive myself. Oh, stop feeling sorry for yourself, stop blaming everybody. Just get back up. Just get back up and walk the walk, talk the talk, and the right doors will open.

Kay's experiences of being housing challenged were also revelatory in that they exposed her to a side of life with which she was not previously familiar and showed her the potential benefits of reaching out for support. She recalled her initial surprise at some of the unexpected challenges that accompanied her circumstances; transportation, the "privilege of time," and the overriding influence poverty can have on one's life were common themes. While public transportation was available to Kay in part due to the shelter providing her bus tokens, she indicated job searching was far more time consuming than she could have ever imagined: "You don't know the *hours* that it takes to

ride the bus, when it's a 20-minute car ride, you know, it's an hour on the bus, so your whole life is, revolves around this situation of being low-income, or homeless." Indeed, she found working to re-attain housing stability was made infinitely more complex the amount of time it took to complete the basic tasks of daily living: "What it takes to get somewhere, low-income, homeless, your whole day is, where am I going to eat, how am I going to eat, where am I going to sleep, how am I going to get there?" She found time was a commodity and a privilege she had not fully appreciated (see Figure 4), noting that for the working poor, "you're not working overtime to better yourself, you're spending five hours or whatever hours on a bus!" Kay was particularly grateful to receive a gift card for gas that would help her ongoing job search process; she had found that "if you don't have a car, you pay dearly in time."



Figure 4. Kay photo 3.

Despite feeling grateful, working hard to get back on her feet, and coming to realize how isolated she had become, Kay still found herself struggling to open up more fully to others: "I stick to myself here. Not a whole lot, I don't talk to anyone about

anything.” But through it all, Kay’s housing challenges had been a learning experience she hoped to always remember: “I hope I never move past this and forget it.... So, I want to be always and forever mindful that, be careful who you step on the way up because you might meet them on the way down.” While critical of those who were ungrateful for or unwilling to seek help, she had greater empathy for the accompanying fear, uncertainty, and self-doubt that came from confronting the prospect of becoming housing challenged. For herself, Kay maintained hope and a forward-thinking, appreciative lens on her current life circumstances:

Because I will come out of it, I will be just hunky-dory! But if I don’t learn from this, or, from the heart, not learned because I mismanaged my funds, or I, um, was taking drugs, or beating on my kids, or running from an abusive spouse, it’s none of that! It’s just life, it gave me a bumpy road, and uh, I can sit back and go ‘why me, why me, why me?’ Why? Because I want to live in a big mansion, drive a brand-new car, and I can just be, go on blind to the hurt of others? So, I just, I, I thank God for this experience. Does that sound ridiculous?

Spencer

Spencer is a 26-year-old, male Caucasian, and proud Irish individual who, with his reddish hair and blue eyes, certainly looks the part. He received his high school diploma through an area community college shortly after being kicked out of high school. With his pragmatic approach to education and his mechanical background that came from racing and motorcycle/vehicle repair, he is presently employed fulltime at a mechanic shop. During my time listening to his story, Spencer was in the midst of his first episode of homelessness, having been at the shelter for two months, living under a bridge the two months prior to that, and also having spent some time couch surfing. When I first began interacting with Spencer, I noticed the tattoo on his leg and the scars all over his body-- the result of years of motorcycle riding and the myriad injuries, surgeries, and repair that

stemmed from it. Beyond outward appearances, we quickly developed a strong rapport as he was a friendly guy who was forthcoming, had strong eye contact, and an easy sense of humor.

Early days. Spencer was just three-years-old when he was first introduced to motorcycles, having been encouraged by his father to explore and learn to figure things out on his own. As Spencer recalled, “He said, ‘Well there’s the motor, there’s the tools, figure it out.’ So I did; and I’ve just kind of been hooked ever since.” This passion, mechanical talent, and belief in his ability to be “Mr. Fix-It” across a variety of domains carried with him over the years. Spencer appeared quite proud to show off some of the equipment he has worked on and built over the years, such as the back-ho he creatively constructed and took a picture of (see Figure 5):

I’ve always been able to have the power to be like, ‘Well, you know, if it’s broken, it’s, you know, you can fix it.’ So I’ve always, you know, I had the motivation to try to fix something, you know, if it’s broken or something’s not working right. You know? So it’s always kind of given me the courage and the strength to get my hands dirty and get in there and try to fix it.



Figure 5. Spencer photo 1.

Spencer spent a good part of his childhood trying to emulate his dad, in large part due to their shared interest in mechanical matters and motorcycles. He shared he felt his dad “made me the way I am now. You know for a while I used to get mad at him because I, I spent my whole life trying to be just like him, you know, because he was my hero.” Yet Spencer’s idolization and efforts to be near his father came at a cost as he was exposed at an early age to his father’s anger, alcoholism, and routine physical abuse. As Irish Catholics, Spencer said he and his father held the belief that men should not hit women. Unfortunately, as the eldest son, this left Spencer as the scapegoat and regular target of violence. Recalling this time he said,

So I was hanging out with him all the time, and he’d be drinking, and my mom would piss him off, or, you know, my sister would piss him off, but I was the only boy, you know, so I usually got most of the wrath.... He could only yell at everybody else, you know? But I was a man, I could take it, you know, so I usually got beat up by him quite a bit.

Far more complicated than a son who looked up to his father as a role model, Spencer’s relationship with his father was strongly mixed. As he relayed, “Some days my dad’s my worst enemy, and some days he’s my hero, you know, so it’s kind of one of those, one of those things.” In retrospect, he came to realize his emulation of his father had not served him well, acknowledging with a sorrowful chuckle that he “didn’t have any really good role models to base off of.” Though he had been resentful of his father over the years, Spencer said he has been working on this as he “can’t be mad at him forever.”

In contrast to his father, Spencer described his mother as a sweet woman who would often protect him from his father: “Because she would usually, you know, stick up for me and my dad started yelling at me in the house, and she would like, you know, stick up for me a little bit.” Regardless of their potential shortcomings, Spencer expressed

admiration for how hard working his parents were, noting they were able to have the things they wanted. On account of this, he said he felt “I’ve just always kind of had everything handed to me, so that’s why I’m all screw[ed] up.” Although abusive, Spencer came to appreciate some aspects of how he was parented. Discussing his belief on the matter, he stated,

It’s like well, you know, kids need a little discipline, you let them get away with everything they, you know, you’re enabling them to fail if they don’t know the difference from right and wrong.... So that’s, so I’m happy the way that my parents did raise me, I’m just unhappy with the choices that I made and me being disrespectful and rebelling.

Outside of the home, Spencer was quite active as a child despite having grown up in a rougher community. Spencer recalled, “I mean, we sat on the floor at night, you know, stay away from the windows.... You know, weren’t allowed to play outside when it got dark.” While he felt he grew up in a crime-ridden community, Spencer said he was able to do well in school, played sports, had many friends, and generally felt good about himself: “We stayed in a pretty crappy neighborhood, but it was pretty, it was pretty tight-knit, it was positive most of the time. You know, compared to most families, you know, I thought, I would say it was pretty good.” Beyond their mixed qualities at home, he shared his parents were quite encouraging of his various involvements:

They were always fully supporting, you know, in sports and outside activities and stuff. You know if you wanted to be in a spelling bee, they’d make sure you were in it. You know, if you wanted to play football, they’d make sure you could play football, wrestle, you know, make all the matches, you know, they took a lot of time out of their hands to make sure that they were there, you know, for activities and sports, and that kind of stuff.

Perhaps most influential was Spencer’s involvement in motocross. Spencer loved the adrenaline and excitement of his sport, having pushed himself to excel at the highest level. Yet much like his relationship with his father, Spencer’s racing lifestyle came at a

cost. His accomplishments and accolades were matched by devastating injuries from which it would often take long periods of time to recover. In hindsight, Spencer shared he felt bad about all the worry and strain he caused to his family whenever he would get injured. As he explained, “Because they love me a lot and they don’t like seeing me getting hurt. You know, and I started getting hurt real early.” Having prided himself on his ability to figure things out on his own, Spencer would feel bad having to rely so heavily on family members’ assistance. He stated, “So that’s kinda, you know, been hard on me, and you know, my family and that kind of stuff.” While certainly challenging at the time, Spencer felt he had grown tremendously from all of the injuries he had to recover from over the years. He still finds himself drawing on the inner resolve he forged from having bounced back so many times from injuries, noting it helped him believe in his ability to survive obstacles that came his way.

The move. When Spencer and his family moved to a new community when he was 11-years-old, he did not expect how much of an adjustment it would be for him. Spencer believed he was largely passed over and no longer received the type of support to which he had become accustomed at home and school. At home, his parents were suddenly less available as their newfound commute from work dramatically shifted the time they returned home. Spencer and his siblings often had to fend for themselves after school, which he felt was challenging:

So then me and my sister we really had to like, you know, do our homework, and then do our chores after we had our snack, and then pull stuff out for dinner and start making dinner and that kind of stuff before my mom and dad got home, otherwise we wouldn’t eat dinner until like ten o’clock.

He described his relationship with his siblings around this time as one marked by a love/hate dynamic. Although they cared for one another, Spencer said his efforts to be

the protective brother were often divisive; he would routinely be physically aggressive toward any boys his sisters would bring home so as to scare them off. Although he had learned to display greater restraint in recent years, Spencer was often quick to use physical force to resolve his problems.

The nature of Spencer's relationship with others in the community also changed significantly at this time. As he recalled, "I went from having a couple hundred friends to having like zero friends." Although his new neighborhood had less crime, Spencer found he struggled with making friends, figuring out the culture of the community, and feeling different from others. This sense of difference partly stemmed from developmental issues caused by exposure to prenatal alcohol and cigarette exposure. Because he was born without a thyroid, Spencer's growth was stunted in comparison to his peers, which became more apparent around this period. Spencer recalled how he "was the shortest, fattest kid in school for the longest time, so I always got bullied and picked on a lot." At the time, it was very difficult for Spencer to make sense of this. Reflecting on how this impacted him, he shared, "I didn't really understand why, you know, so then I, I started, you know, getting depressed a lot, and you know I started acting out a lot." Such experiences led to a lot of self-blame, which he has ultimately learned to reframe but struggled with at that age: "I thought it was like my fault for the longest time and now, you know, it was just kids being mean kids, you know?"

Although his teacher and mother tried to advocate for him, this ultimately backfired as his peers labeled him a "snitch." Meanwhile, his father encouraged Spencer to resolve his problems through the use of physical violence; so he did. Spencer relayed how "then after that, you know, I'd build stuff up and then to where I couldn't anymore,

and then I would just explode.” While his father attributed this to Spencer working through his “Irish anger,” Spencer was formally diagnosed with Tourette’s Syndrome at this time. Spencer recalled feeling conflicted about this news:

So that was, you know, kind of hard to figure out, and then once we figured that out, then I felt even more bad, because I was like, “Oh, well I’m just not a normal person,” you know? There’s something different about me and that’s something they’re gonna pick on me because I’m different than everybody else.

These types of encounters and experiences with peers had a big impact on Spencer’s sense of himself and his approach to relationships. In many ways, Spencer felt he was still trying to figure out the right balance:

It took me a while to kinda figure out, you know, I don’t have to walk around and be a tough guy like all the time. You know, you’d kinda block everybody out until I’d decide to let somebody in.... But you still gotta kinda, you know, walk like you’re on thin ice almost, until it kinda get to really know people, and the community, and how they do things, and you know, what you can and cannot do as far as getting in trouble.

In addition to shifts in his experience with peers, Spencer struggled with cultural differences he encountered at school. Accustomed to feeling cared for and supported by his teachers, Spencer found it difficult to find his teachers no longer made themselves available for help outside of class. Recalling this transition, he shared,

All the way up to like sixth grade in middle school before we moved, you know I got A’s and B’s like my sister. Then when I moved, the, the way they did schooling was different, and they didn’t like accept the classes that I took. They didn’t accept all those.... So like, when I moved there, instead of starting with A’s and B’s, I started with all F’s. And like, I just never got back up, you know, and the way they taught was a little different, I didn’t really pick it up, you know, so then after that I just kind of barely passed my way through school, you know? I almost flunked out a couple times.

Yet through this all, Spencer managed to have continued success with his motocross involvements. As he recalled, “I was just trying to find an outlet to, you know, do something. Instead of having to fight with the neighborhood kids or being bored or

something.” It was during this time that Spencer began to experience a lot of success at the competitive level: “By the time I was 15, I had four state championships; I’d broken like 15 bones from racing motorcycles.... 26 now, I’ve had four surgeries, 26 broken bones, I’m a six-time state champion here.”

The fifteenth birthday and the ensuing rebellion. Spencer’s 15th birthday proved to be a major turning point in his life. Having not had much success with friendships in his new community, Spencer had been looking forward to an outing planned for his birthday. He was devastated when his father did not show up:

I had to send all my friends home because we were waiting for him to come home from work, and he just never showed up...and he came home at like four o’clock in the morning, still drunk. Took me to school, still drunk.... Took a shower and went back to work, still drunk. And then he quit drinking like a month later and I was full-fledged alcoholic like a month later.

In light of this apparent role reversal, Spencer’s substance use became heavier, his grades suffered all the more, and he increasingly began to rebel against doing what his parents told him. Spencer’s social relationships started to revolve more and more around alcohol use. As he recalled, “My friends in high school enabled me, and then I started going to high school parties after football games and that kind of stuff.... Leave completely plastered or, you know, I was just a mess.”

In the midst of such struggles, a notable positive for Spencer was the development of a positive bond with a friend from school. Spencer had to laugh looking back at the evolution of their relationship, recalling how they had been introduced to one another in a physical fight outside of school grounds. Finding common ground over challenging family dynamics, feeling like an outsider, and a love of all things mechanical, Spencer and this friend began to look out for one another at school and forged a lasting friendship.

Their bond was so strong they eventually went through the process of having his friend legally adopted, officially making them brothers. In addition to helping protect him from bullies at school, Spencer's adopted brother provided a safe outlet for him to seek out when things were conflicted at home:

So whenever I got in an argument with my dad or my parents, you know, I can leave and pff, and go over there and just crash for a couple nights and it was only two and a half miles away, you know? So if I wasn't home my parents knew where I was, they weren't too worried.

Although his relationship with his adopted brother served as a protective buffer for him during a difficult time of his life, Spencer's grades and other relationships continued to dwindle. Often compared to and held to the same standards as his older sisters, Spencer had to become more self-reliant and begin to provide for himself. He shared he has often believed himself to be "kind of like the black sheep in my family" as a result. As he recalled this transition, he relayed,

When we moved and I started failing a lot, you know, then I started having to like work side jobs ... like mowing people's lawn and that kind of stuff because I didn't have good grades anymore. So my parents didn't want to pay for me to go racing, but I still wanted to go racing, so I had to like help pay for my gate fee, or gas.... That's when I really started to having to work on a lot of my own stuff.

On account of his poor grades and behavior, Spencer was eventually expelled from his high school. Although kicked out of school, Spencer bounced back to graduate shortly thereafter. Unlike with his siblings, Spencer said his father asked him to leave the home promptly after he managed to graduate, leaving him largely on his own and with limited support. Yet he was not entirely on his own. Spencer noted another major factor in the conflict with his family revolved around his decision to get married to his high school girlfriend. Explaining why his family ostracized him over circumstances here, he stated, "I married her because she got pregnant, you know? And we're all strong Irish Catholics

and my parents are already mad at me.” Newly graduated, married, and freshly kicked out of the home, Spencer continued to work hard at various jobs to not only support himself but his new family as well.

During this phase of his life, Spencer did not respond positively to his father’s “do as I say, not as I do” instructions. Spencer shared that his father “always suggested me not to drink, and, you know, ‘Don't drink, and don't do the stupid stuff that I did.’ But I was like, ‘You just told me not to do something, now I'm gonna go do it.’” Such patterns of reactance were a common thread and impediment throughout much of his narrative until recently. Although his feelings of anger and resentment prevented him from taking in some of the wisdom of his father’s perspectives at the time, Spencer shared he had come to appreciate the lessons about life choices he picked up from father. As he said,

My dad's kind of taught me that, you know, life's all about choices.... And depending on your choices, depends on if you're going to get reprimanded or not. You know, good or bad.... You know if you work hard and pound the pavement for two weeks straight, and fill out the applications all day every day, more than likely you're probably going to get a job eventually.... You know if you drink and drive all the time, eventually you're gonna get a DUI and you're gonna go to jail or kill somebody.

Divorce, shadow life, and the downward spiral. Partly due to the negative crowds he had been associating with and partly due to the need to support his family, Spencer began illegal drug transport and various criminal involvements. He even recalled one instance of having been involved in a high-speed chase: “I outran the cops, and they tried to roadblock me, and I pushed a cop off the road and I kept going.... Didn't know there was a helicopter, and they got pictures of my truck.” Spencer’s criminal involvements eventually caught up with him several years later. During the interim, Spencer went through several trying experiences.

After three years of marriage, Spencer got divorced. He discovered his wife had been cheating on him, although that was only part of his difficulties. Spencer related how “I caught her sleeping with my best friend. So we got divorced and I tried to file full custody, and then I found out the kid wasn’t even mine after I raised him for like three years.” While dealing with the pain of this sudden loss and betrayal, Spencer’s healing process was complicated by the response of his family. He discussed how he had been judged harshly in light of his family’s Irish Catholic beliefs, noting that “they don’t believe in divorce either, so now they’re mad at me about that too.” Further describing this rupture he said, “After that, you know, people just didn’t trust me anymore. I didn’t give a shit anyways because I didn’t care what anybody thought.”

Already having to become further self-reliant in light of his estranged relationships, Spencer’s situation was worsened by his adopted brother’s decision to move out-of-state around the same time. Recalling the pain of this time he disclosed,

We all used to be, you know, real close and tight-knit, and, you know, my brother moved ... to live with his mom because he couldn’t handle being up here anymore, you know, so that kind of bummed me out because I had just got done with my divorce.... Everybody that I love was kind of leaving, you know?

Despite his adopted brother’s move, Spencer shared they still managed to stay in daily contact with one another. Although Spencer would struggle for the next several years, he now derives a lot of comfort and motivation to maintain sobriety in part due to his connection with his adopted brother. They even have aspirations of opening their own business together some day.

While he is now “happily” divorced, Spencer shared it was still quite challenging for him to work through at the time: “That was like the first girl that I really loved, you know? So that kinda hit pretty hard.... Then I really started using.” In the wake of these

various severed ties and losses, Spencer entered into a two-year period of heavy, daily substance use as a functional alcoholic. As he put it, “I was still fully dedicated, I was still racing, you know? That was, you know, my shadow life, you know, once I got home, the doors were locked and I didn’t answer the doors.”

Spencer shared it eventually got to the point where he began to sell his bikes and even work while injured to support his addiction. In the midst of these ups and downs, Spencer managed to purchase a home. However, his criminal record finally caught up with him, leading to subsequent jail and prison time along with a felony status. Spencer lost his home due to his inability to make payments. He added, “When I was 23, you know, I got arrested and sold all my dirt bikes to help pay my restitution fines and all that stuff, and I haven’t really raced since.” Spencer expressed he still has strong feelings of shame around his lack of continued involvement with racing.

When his substance use eventually caught up with him, Spencer shared one of the most challenging parts: “I had to admit to everybody that, you know, I’ve been a hard-core addict for the last two and a half years.” Spencer endorsed a lot of self-blame for his circumstances, having little compassion for his circumstances. During this period of time, he felt he was particularly arrogant, rebellious, and angry at the world: “Because I’ve been so selfish and so self-centered for so long, you know, I never really cared about anybody except for myself after I got divorced.” Beyond the impact on his relationships and self-esteem, his pattern of use brought about certain health complications. Not only was Spencer unable to afford his medications during this time period, he also developed memory-related difficulties due to his use and concussions he sustained. On account of this, he lamented the fact that “so much of those good experience that I probably did

have, I just drank and drugged so much that I don't remember." Furthering this point, he said, "Because of the drugs and alcohol so much, you know I've deleted a lot of, you know, memories or, you know, learning curves that I've already been through."

Digging the hole and crawling back out. Following his prison time, Spencer moved to the Midwest to be near his uncle and grandfather while opening up his own business for a while. Spencer always felt close to these relatives, thus making his current predicament that much more challenging for him: "I know that's all that gramps would want, to see me succeed, and I think that's why they're so angry with me. Because they know that I'm pretty smart and I do know what the hell I'm doing." Although he was doing reasonably well for himself there, his uncle encouraged him to move back to the Rocky Mountain region. This was just as well for Spencer; after his divorce and jail time, there was a part of him that wanted to engage in family repair work. Back near his family, Spencer bought his second home and began to try to re-establish himself. However, due to some financial oversights made while running his own business, an IRS auditing revealed Spencer had not properly paid taxes over the past few years; thus assets were possessed, including his home, effectively leaving Spencer homeless.

At first, Spencer spent some time couch surfing with some friends and acquaintances. Yet this exposed him to friends who were a risk factor for substance use and an environment that was highly unstable. He explained, "People that I hung out with, you know, they were just like me. You know? Selfish, self-centered. You know when you hang out with a crowd long enough, you're gonna do it." Spencer was well aware of the slippery slope he faced when it came to substance abuse. As he believed he had an "addictive personality," he explained how "it'll take over your life, you know? Birds fly,

the sun shines, drinkers drink, addicts do drugs.” Thus, Spencer did what he could to minimize his level of risk while in a risky environment; “So usually I’d get there at like midnight and I’d leave at like six in the morning before anybody woke up, you know?” Spencer even spent some time living on a countertop in a tool shed owned by his family in order to find some shelter and try to maintain sobriety: “Before every time I’d try being sober, you know, I’d still hang out with those same people.... Thinking they were my friends, but I was trying to hang out with them sober, and, you know, it was impossible.”

Although trying to keep his spirits up, Spencer became increasingly depressed and down on himself. He lamented the fact that “I have all these great capabilities but, you know, my drug and alcohol abuse, you know, put me in such a deep rut, you know, that I kinda almost threw all that kinda stuff away.” Spencer was particularly impacted by feeling as though he had many talents and accomplishments but, now homeless, had little to show for it. As he explained,

After I went to jail, I, you know, I really haven’t been mentally right since, you know I’ve been pretty depressed and upset with myself....I’m 26 years old, I have six state championships, and I’m, here I am staying at the homeless shelter and I don’t have a damn thing to show for it except for a trash bag full of clothes.

To make matters worse, Spencer shared, “When I was homeless, you know, I didn’t have any money for any of my medications, I barely had money to pay for, pay my phone bill.” Thus, Spencer found himself hitting a new low point and ended up living outside under a bridge for a few months. This experience was revelatory for Spencer in many ways, as he recalled,

It was life changing, honestly. I mean, you can’t get any lower on the totem pole then, you know, sleeping under a bridge. You know and I thought, I thought

homeless people were just like old, disabled veterans that like, you know, failed to work and they were too lazy and they'd rather panhandle.

Spencer felt he was digging a deeper hole for himself while he was living under the bridge. Finding himself mad at the world, closed-minded, spiteful, upset at his family's lack of support, and feeling as though he had given up on himself, Spencer was in a trying period of his life. He explained,

I'd never really been homeless, and then, by the time I was homeless after like the first couple weeks, it was like.... "I screwed up and I'm gonna be homeless for the rest of my life," and I just kind of gave up on myself.... I just didn't really care anymore; I was over it.

The tension with his family was particularly challenging for Spencer. Although he wanted to work to repair their relationships, for a while he was told to keep his distance.

Spencer did not handle this dynamic well at first:

I drank like 40 days ago, and I drank and got drunk under the bridge because it was cold, and I was over it, I was pissed off again, you know, I was like rock bottom.... I was homeless, my parents live 20 miles away, they know I'm homeless, you know? They don't really give a shit, you know? Because I, I screwed up my respect for them.... They're like, "Well, you know, if you want to live in a gutter, you're not dragging us down with you," they'd tell me.... Kind of like tough love.

Because of these shifts, Spencer discussed how he saw himself as an outsider in his own family to a certain extent. He was fairly emotional as he relayed, "That's probably like the hardest thing for me to deal with, you know? Is knowing that, not only that I hurt myself in that process, but I hurt the people that really care about me."

Witnessing how many positive changes his family had made in recent years, he could not help but wonder if it was due to his absence. Musing about this, he shared, "It's just kind of weird on how, how much they've changed. I never really thought about it before." As such, Spencer had been trying to be civil and helpful whenever he was allowed to come

around to the home: “I try not to fight when I do get to see them, I try to make it as positive as possible. So that way they don’t really have to go back to their old ways.” In hindsight, Spencer had come to appreciate why his family might have distanced themselves:

I can’t believe what I was doing to myself and the, you know, the people that you know, really care about me and hate to see me in that position. And they don’t want to see me in that position so they separate themselves so they don’t have to deal with it.... Because they have enough of their own stuff going on in their life. And they want to help me, but they know that if they help me, they’re enabling me.

Eventually, Spencer was able to find a way to remove himself from his rough living environment: “I just kept digging deeper, and deeper, and deeper, until finally, I just kinda crawled my way out.” Although he had been at a low point for himself, Spencer had managed to be resourceful and successful in meeting the conditions of his parole: “I’ve been a felon for the last three years.... I’ve been successful in my parole. I just had my parole transferred over to my probation, been doing drug and alcohol classes, haven’t failed any UA’s or BA’s.” Spencer mowed lawns to make some income, found ways to maintain hygiene, and came to recognize his need for additional support beyond his mandated substance use classes. Sharing how goals helped keep him motivated, he said,

I don’t want to sleep under a bridge my whole life, you know? I’d like to get remarried, you know, have a real family, have some kids, you know? Get a house again.... And that kind of stuff, you know? Be a part of society instead of being a hoodlum in society.

It was through a contact at AA that Spencer came to learn about the shelter where he was staying. Somewhat cruelly, Spencer discovered the shelter had been within view of the bridge where he had been staying: “I didn’t even know about this place. It looked

so nice from that bridge, I thought it was like a government building.... I stared at it every night for two months and never even knew it was a shelter.” He actually captured the view of the bridge from the shelter to demonstrate the irony of it all (see Figure 6):

“The trailer and the bridge is where I was ... my picture for at work and my equipment that I made is like kind of ... my potential, where I’m at now, you know, but I’m living at the shelter.”



Figure 6. Spencer photo 2.

Spencer actually took several pictures in his photo-elicitation project that served to keep life in perspective, reminded him of where he once was, and motivated him to keep moving forward on the “good path” in an adaptive manner:

I just don’t really want to go down that path again, because I’ve, I’ve hurt myself quite a bit, and having my parents and my family be more disappointed in me than they were pissed off at me, if they’re pissed off at me I can live to deal with that, but them being disappointed, you know that really.... It hits home, it hurts.... Because it’s hard to be proud of myself, but you always feel better when somebody else is proud of you.

As such, Spencer is now trying to apply lessons he has learned from AA while maximizing the opportunities available to him while staying at the shelter. He discussed how he was learning to recognize what he could and could not change as well as the influence of positive people in his life through work, AA, and the shelter:

If you hang out with people that aren't gonna contribute to society, eventually you're no longer going to contribute to society.... If you hang out with sober people that, you know, have jobs, and work, and they still have fun on the weekends, you know, but they can do it without druggin' or drinking, if you hang out with them long enough, then eventually you'll know how to do that.

Continuing to bounce back, Spencer has been setting and working toward goals by engaging with positive people, repairing relationships with his family, working hard at his job, avoiding triggers, and using his talents for good. Now using his skills for his betterment, he said he is “trying to use my skills to like not only like further my future, but better myself, you know? Before I was using those skills just to make money to, you know, just to get high and messed up.” Spencer shared he is taking pride in being able to pay off his debts, earn money, and save for his future. He noted the shelter has provided many positive opportunities, which has boosted his confidence: “It kinda was like, you know, the community giving me a second chance to do something with myself. And since I've been here, you know, I've been able to maintain my sobriety and I got a job now.”

At the same time, Spencer was cautiously optimistic as he felt he was on “thin ice” at the moment. Exploring this dynamic, he explained,

The fine line of ... if you do the right thing you're ... gonna keep doing good, but if you do that one wrong thing, pff, you're done.... So that's kind of hard to deal with on a daily basis.... But luckily I had enough negative things in my life to learn off that to know where to go for positive things from now on.

He also believed in his ability to overcome his circumstances: “Right now I’m like barely holding onto a, barely holding onto a thread; but I ain’t letting go of it either.” In an effort to capture the aspirations he has for his future, such as a desire to open up a shop some day with his adopted brother, Spencer captured the image of the car below (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. Spencer photo 3.

Finding himself more hopeful, optimistic, open-minded, and having patience for himself as a work-in-progress, Spencer found he was “just now starting to work back to get back to where I was or even better.” In so doing, he was truly trying to reflect on what he has been through and how to make the most out of it. As he said,

Because a mistake's only a mistake if you continue to repeat it.... But if you do something with all your mistakes then it's just a learning curve.... I'm trying to turn all my past bad karma, bad indiscretions into a learning curve and make something positive out of it.

Scooter

Scooter is a 36-year-old Caucasian man who received his GED after dropping out of high school and has gone on to complete some college courses. He would ultimately like to finish college although currently experiences some barriers to doing it. The pseudonym Scooter was chosen because it was a childhood nickname from his grandparents because he “ever really crawled, I always just kind of scooted along on one knee.” While Scooter was not initially selected to participate by luck of the draw, he was flexible, understanding, and happy to jump in after a previously selected participant dropped out. During my time interacting with him, Scooter was in the midst of his approximately 25th episode of homelessness and had been homeless for the last six months. Scooter had been episodically homeless intermittently for around 14 years of his life altogether, all of which started at the age of 15 following the death of his grandparents. When I first began speaking with Scooter, I noticed his thin frame, shy and slanted smile, and husky voice. Beyond outward appearances, Scooter was very thoughtful and forthcoming, albeit preoccupied at first with his need to obtain employment soon. Scooter described his employment status as “depressing,” having been relentlessly job seeking without success; however, he had managed to obtain employment partway through our time together. Much like in his own life, Scooter worked hard to focus on the positives as well as the challenges in his life as he hoped his story could be beneficial for others.

Craving attention. Scooter was born in the Midwest and raised there by his grandparents; he had limited contact with his own parents over the years. In describing himself, one of the first things he said was “my mom wanted to abort me. My dad wasn’t around.” This theme of feeling rejected and unwanted seemed to permeate his narrative, his experiences, and, in many ways, his sense of self:

You know, because it’s hard growing up knowing that neither one of your parents wanted you, and one actually wanted to kill you, you know, before you were even born. It’s really hard to try to put that, put that into your mind and say, ‘Oh, he’s not really a bad person.’ It’s, it’s kind of hard to kind of deal with that so, I think it was more the attention. . . . I can say that a lot of my life is. Now, now that it, it’s changed now with this past homelessness. That I’m feeling now that it’s, it’s more or less that I don’t want to be noticed.

The limited contact Scooter had with his mother while growing up tended to revolve around times when his half-brother was dropped off to visit; but Scooter was not aware that he was his half-brother at first. In the contact they had over the years, he indicated his mother would often put him down: “She would always say that I’m so much like my father, you know and, you know I, I mean, really kind of like put me down.” Scooter did not really know his own father beyond the fact his grandfather did not care for him. Recalling from his childhood, Scooter said, “He came to my grandfather’s house to pick me up for the weekend. Tried to, you know, spend some time with me. But my grandfather called the cops to get him off the property.” In general, Scooter felt the confusion surrounding his own biological parents contributed to his rebelliousness and desire for attention.

Scooter received significant amounts of attention from his grandparents as they were involved and positive influences in his life. He shared, “I believe they supported me a lot. It was me trying to be the rebellious person. You know, not having a mother or

father, being raised by my, I would try to push the limits.” He relayed his grandparents were both active in his life and showed an investment in his upbringing, schooling, religious development, and other involvements. With his grandfather having retired when Scooter was still young, he shared, “He got me into baseball, school, and everything else. Uh, you know, which I was real good at baseball. So he made sure I was at every game. We’d always go to the Cubs games together.” Scooter recalled with fondness his time going to church with his grandmother and being baptized. Although he expressed he was never held back and things were all positive regarding his grandparents, in retrospect, it was not always easy for Scooter being raised by his grandparents:

They were a little more strict and tough-minded, but you know now that I’m older I’m glad that they were the ones who raised me. You know, knowing that if I back-talked, I actually got back-handed. You know I got slapped across the mouth, you know respect your elders, and you know, I got good morals, and courtesy, and manners, and everything else because of the way they taught me. Yeah, it might have been strict, you know, being a kid, but now that I grew up I really understand why they were doing it.

Scooter noted he struggled with bulimic behaviors for about four or five years starting in early adolescence, which ultimately caused dental concerns. He attributed this behavior to concerns around weight gain as his grandparents were themselves overweight.

School was one environment in which, whether for positive or negative reasons, he was sure to get the attention he craved. Earlier on in his education, he recalled acting out in class and relishing the attention it garnered. Since his grandparents showed an investment in his education, he was sure to be held accountable for his behavior at home as well. Due to his behavior, Scooter was initially placed in special education in third grade. He stated, “They thought I was slow.... So they put me in special education. While I was in special education they found out that I wasn’t slow, that I was bored.”

Once he was better understood, Scooter recalled he generally enjoyed school, particularly when he was placed in more challenging courses: “I was in all advanced level classes.... It’s a funny thing about, you know, my teachers enjoying me, because they were just shocked that that’s why I was getting in trouble was because I was bored and everything.” Intelligence and academic potential were a point of pride for Scooter.

Involvement with sports and the community were other points of pride and esteem for Scooter in childhood. Scooter grew up in an active, involved community where positive contact with adults, play, and accountability reigned. He shared he had been well-respected and well-reputed as a kid with parents and coaches valuing him as a positive influence:

Like all my baseball coaches, I mean they really, you know, enjoyed me.... I got along with all the parents, and you know, I mean, so pretty much anybody I was around when I was younger, knew my grandparents and stuff like that, really enjoyed me because they knew I was real respected, and you know I had manners.

Scooter said this reputation helped him feel good about himself as a child, although he also lamented, “Then of course the negative sets in and goes ahead and says, you know, ‘If I wouldn’t have did this, or if I wouldn’t have did that,’ or whatever, I could probably still have some of them relationships.” For Scooter, his negative spiral began following the death of his grandparents.

Grief, gangs, and growing up too soon. Both of Scooter’s grandparents passed away when he was at the untimely age of 15. The complex grief and impact of these losses cast long-lasting ripples that affect him to this day. As he shared, “Still to this day I’ve never been to my grandparents’ gravesite.... I always told myself that if I ever went there, I’d never leave.” Scooter questioned his faith and blamed God for a long while following their deaths, wondering why he had to lose the only ones who truly cared for

him in his life. In retrospect, Scooter acknowledged, “There wasn’t really nothing I coulda did about my grandparents, you know, but I still blamed myself for a long time. Maybe if I was a little bit better, I wouldn’t have caused a lot of stress on them.” In discussing how he has had trouble trusting or connecting in relationships ever since, Scooter acknowledged, “Once my grandparents passed away it’s really hard for me to attach to anybody. Knowing that maybe I’ll be leaving, or they’ll be leaving, or you know, something, so I try not to attach to too many people.” Scooter’s loss was further complicated by yet another experience of rejection from his mother. Despite having no other family to speak of to take him in, his mother refused to do so. He painfully recalled, “My mother signed the papers, and had me emancipated because she didn’t want nothing to do with me.”

Now legally emancipated and trying to make it on his own, Scooter tried his best to move forward for a while. For a time, school kept him busy and staved off intense feelings of grief. Recalling this period, he shared that school

was really important to me because it kept me active to where I couldn’t get into my own head and reflect like on my grandparents dying, or, uh, you know how my mom treated me, or how my dad didn’t want me, and all that kind of stuff. It allowed my brain to keep thinking about something else and focus on something else, and not try to pity myself.

Although somewhat helpful for coping in the short term, Scooter never fully had the chance to process his own grief. He eventually dropped out of high school as his grief, diminished focus, and need to support himself made it to where he “couldn’t even think about school.” Largely alone and with priorities shifted from school and baseball to survival, Scooter relayed, “I had to be able to afford to eat, and you know, pay people for

living in their house, stuff like that.... Joined a gang because I needed that.... Felt that I needed more closeness of people around me.”

At first, Scooter found the gang provided him the closeness he hungered for, attention and rewards for his work ethic (albeit misdirected), as well as the alcohol and drugs to help numb his pain. Speaking to his substance use, Scooter expressed, “They allowed me to escape, everything. You know? Uh, it was almost like how I said school was; it kept my mind busy. That’s what the drugs for me.” While Scooter felt his gang involvement was fairly innocuous at first, it had the unintended effect of pushing away friends and community members who had cared for him: “Because I was out drugging and drinking a lot.... A lot of them ties kind of like pulled back from me because they seen where I was headed and all the destruction I was going for.” After realizing the gang was headed in a more dangerous direction, Scooter requested to get jumped out of the gang after being part of it for one year. In describing what this process entailed, Scooter shared, “I wanted to be out. So I had 10 people for 10 minutes beating and I could not fight back.... They tore me up pretty good ... but I figure I was out.” Thinking he had rid himself of all gang ties, Scooter quickly found gang members still wanted to utilize him for his discounted drug and gun-related connections. After refusing continuously, Scooter became the target of violence to the point where “they kept seeing me, and they put a smash on sight to a shoot on sight.... So then I moved south of where I was, to where my grandparents were originally born.”

Having moved away to escape gang violence, Scooter thought he was ready for a fresh start; however, his financial circumstances forced him to live with and be around less than savory characters. As Scooter put it, “If you hang around knuckleheads, you’re

going to be a knucklehead.” Unfortunately for Scooter, he did not realize the wisdom of this philosophy until after getting caught up and arrested for a break-in incident.

Although he was the least involved, Scooter felt the court system held him accountable since at the age of 17, he was the oldest kid involved. Scooter felt unjustly charged in many ways; “They waited until I was 18 so they could convict me so that I could go to the actual prison system instead of just getting probation like the other kids that actually did the crime.” Thus, Scooter found himself in prison as a young adult for the next year and a half. However, Scooter described this as a turning point for him as it led to a change in priorities and a return to faith. In his words, “It did kind of straighten me up, and gave me a whole different mindset on life and kept me out of the street.”

A period of instability. Due to good behavior, Scooter found himself out of jail at the age of 20 on work release. After completing his parole, Scooter slowly started trying to turn things around for himself by always working to bring in some form of income. It was at this time that Scooter tested for and earned his GED, relaying that with his test scores he “missed a scholarship by 13 points.... And me being out of school that long, and retaining that much.... I was like, if I can retain this, I’m going back to school.” With renewed energy and confidence, Scooter started going to junior college but soon found lingering mental health concerns, ongoing use of alcohol and drugs such as “Prozac,” and a felt lack of support proved too much to handle: “A lot of depression and stuff started setting in about my grandparents. You know, not having no family around, trying to do everything myself, and no type of support system anywhere.” Suffering an accumulation of academic setbacks, Scooter wound up dropping classes, failing courses, and eventually withdrawing altogether. This time period ultimately

created future barriers to education in light of the impact on his GPA and financial aid eligibility.

These difficulties eventually led to an inpatient intervention. As someone who struggled with trust, Scooter shared he had negative experiences with his psychiatrist as he felt he was being treated like a diagnosis rather than as a person. As he described,

To me I was something out of a book that they read, you never really got to know me or know what my problems was and try to deal with it. They're like, "Oh, well you tried killing yourself because of this and that, and you smoked weed at the time so you're an addict." You know? "So you got this. You know what I learned in college and read out of the book, you got this." You know everybody is different. They just never ever really decided to actually talk to the person, get to know them and find out what's wrong with them.

Not wanting to be prescribed medications and having difficulty connecting with his providers, Scooter began to turn again to his faith for support upon his release.

In the coming years, Scooter found he needed to rely on his faith, his ingenuity in finding employment, and his hard work ethic to get by as instability would become a defining characteristic for much of his life. Due to financial constraints, Scooter "never had a place to live by [himself]" and has found himself episodically homeless between several months-long periods of couch surfing or temporary leases. Scooter described the transiency of his living situation: "Mostly bouncing around house to house. Most of them already had families and everything else, got a place, either I'd leave, or ... they felt crowded having another person there, so then I'm out on the street again." At times, Scooter felt he was prejudiced against based on his prison background as he shared with frustration:

I mean, to society I've fulfilled my debt, and, and, I was rehabilitated enough to be released or whatever, but then after you get out, do you know how hard it is to find a job? Do you know how hard it is for everybody that knows you say, "Man, you just got out of prison? You know I heard you went to prison for stealing."

Or, you know, then they don't want me in their house because they could misplace something and then they're looking straight at me that I stole it.... There is stereotypes all over the United States, it don't matter where you go. You know, for somebody being homeless. They find out you're homeless, all of a sudden now you want money, or can you give me a ride here, or will you give me food, or... I've never asked nobody. For like, when I'm homeless, because you know I'll get myself up. All I need to do is find a job and stuff like that, and I can get myself back out.

His prison background and instability of living arrangements were compounded at times by unpredictable shifts in employment. Despite always being a hard worker on the job, Scooter expressed frustration at how “jobs at the drop of a dime say, you know, Bye!” You know, because they got that clause in there that says we can fire you any time we want to for any reason or whatever.” There were periods when Scooter found he had nowhere to turn to and did what he could to get by. Recalling such times, he shared,

I mean I tried sleeping in my car or whatever. And then, me personally walking into work knowing that I hadn't taken a shower in three days. Or whatever, okay now how professional am I looking. You know? And are they going to fire me now, and stuff like this, and I'm, it just got to the point where, why am I even going? Just to get fired? Because I'm wearing the same clothes I wore yesterday, or you know I, it's just, pretty rough.

Such episodes of homelessness would take a toll each time; Scooter remembered, “Like each bit, each spot when I went into homelessness, I kept blaming myself, you know, there's something I coulda did different.”

In spite of such instability, Scooter maintained a five to six year relationship throughout his mid-20s; at one point, they had lived together and gotten engaged, having started the process of planning and paying for their wedding. Yet things fell apart in the end after it came to light she had lied to and cheated on him. Scooter ended the relationship thereafter, relaying, “Why do I need to associate with a person like that?”

But all of these interpersonal experiences of rejection, abandonment, and loss added up for Scooter over the years:

I don't trust people enough, you know I don't give people the benefit of the doubt. You know, I either think they're going to leave, or abandon, like the, start up a relationship with a friend or something, and the feel the abandonment that they might leave at any time, so I don't, you know I don't go full force into a relationship with a friend or significant other, something like that. I don't give it my all, I just still kind of stayed distant.

Changing priorities and turning to faith. Painful as the break-up might have been, the relationship and its end seemed to serve as a catalyst for Scooter to shift his priorities away from substance use and back toward his faith, both in practice and in coping. Scooter wanted to emphasize that even while using drugs, he had always been a diligent worker on the job. Yet for Scooter,

it got to the point where, you know, I'm blowing all this money, whatever, it's not solving nothing. You know, it's kind of reality slips back in or whatever, and you know, then I get my whole mindset back to where this ain't helping nothing.... Everything that I thought I was getting out of the drugs or the alcohol by taking them, I can do myself. I didn't need the substances to do it, because it was more of a mental thing.

Recognizing that he needed help, Scooter shared he “started following spirit, trusting again. And I went to a Christian-based program.... It's kind of like a rehab, but it wasn't, I didn't go there for that reason. I went there for the faith-based program.” This program was a turning point for Scooter as he not only got support for sobriety, depression, and his spiritual well-being, he also developed a powerful mentor relationship with a reformed gang leader. One of the most meaningful aspects of their relationship centered on the fact that his mentor actually took time to get to know him as a person. This mentor also taught him to engage in positive thinking, let go of the past, and focus on the present so he could work to be a better person in the future:

He really drilled that in my head. That I can't go back and bring my grandparents back, I can't go back and tell all the gang members I'm sorry that I joined the gang and all that, I can't go to the drug dealers and everything else and say I want my money back. You know I cannot do, I cannot change nothing I did before. But I can change what I'm doing now. And I can change my whole mindset about my priorities and what needs to be done, and what, how I can be a better person for other people in the future.

Thus, at the age of 26, Scooter became clean of drugs and has abstained from alcohol since the age of 29. He also shared that thereafter, he began to really notice places in the community where he could give back "from then on, really." Whether helping out at nursing homes or shelter food lines, Scooter said, "It made me feel pretty good doing it ... to know that I was once there in the lines or whatever, to be able to go back and actually do something really helped me out."

Other than an emotional period surrounding his mother's death a few years ago and ongoing instability of employment and housing, Scooter managed to rely on his faith, work ethic, and volunteer efforts to survive. Although his employment history had been somewhat scattered, Scooter managed to accumulate enough experience to be considered a professional in his line of work. Aspiring for something greater and eager to get out of the unpleasant working conditions of his most recent job, Scooter jumped at the opportunity to get a well-paying warehouse management position that had opened up in the Rocky Mountain region.

Education versus experience. Having been invited for a final in-person interview, Scooter quit his old job and found himself aboard a train toward the Rockies. By unfortunate coincidence, his train was waylaid by seven hours while enroute, making him miss his scheduled interview time and ultimately losing his chance at the job offer. As Scooter suddenly found himself unemployed, unknown, and unhoused in a new state,

he was quite critical of himself for not having planned differently: “Especially getting older, you think you should be getting a little more intelligent on these things, and learn from your mistakes before. But you know sometimes I act without thinking first.... Usually it’s pretty bad consequences when you do.”

New to the area, Scooter found himself lacking contacts, an awareness of resources, and felt somewhat trapped and alone. Scooter captured this experience in his photo-elicitation project with the image of an isolated cat hiding underneath a tarp, all alone (see Figure 8), noting it “kind of symbolizes what I’ve done to myself.” Like himself, afraid and encumbered by obstacles yet not giving in, Scooter expressed, “It might be scared, but, once it gets done being scared it will leave that situation and somebody might be able to adopt it, pick it up, it has potential to be a lot better situation,” further stating that “it so resembles the situation I’m in right now.



Figure 8. Scooter photo 1.

Scooter eventually caught wind of one of the temporary shelters in town and began staying there but noted, “Being over there you’re constantly being around people

drinking, people shooting heroin in the bathroom.... It's something I wasn't really comfortable with." Scooter entered the lottery system to be admitted to the present shelter as quickly as he could although wished he had been aware of this resource sooner.

Finding himself in need of new employment in a hurry, Scooter became frustrated by the job search process as his resume was marred by employment instability. As he explained, "Only a year on this one, only four months on that one. You know but it's mostly because of me jumping around, not being able to go to work because I don't have a place to stay or nothing." Despite the potential limitations of his past, Scooter continued to work hard to move forward, relaying he had "been here, just over a month, and I've gotten like 350 applications out, I've been to at least 30 interviews, but I'm just waiting on them, the other people."

By the time I interviewed him, Scooter had been on an interview nearly every day though he found himself repeatedly discovering, "Instead of now hiring, it's more accepting applications." Scooter sensed some job discrimination from those who discovered he was staying in a transitional shelter and also felt taken advantage of regarding his time when jobs he interviewed for were not actually available. With outrage, he said, "You already know I'm unemployed, and I had one find out that I was living in the [shelter], they won't even answer my phone calls or call me back or nothing!" For someone who tries hard and prides himself on his work ethic, feeling discriminated against based on his housing instability was hard for Scooter to take, noting, "The stereotypes really bring me down. They really do." He elaborated,

I don't try to stereotype nobody or whatever, because I don't like it when it's done to me.... There's stereotypes out there all the time. And, uh, you know if you're homeless, then you probably smell and you're begging for money because you're too lazy to go out and get a job. You know, that's one of the hardest ones,

because you know, when you're actually out there trying to get a job when you're homeless, and they look at you that way, it's real hard to get a job.

Although he could focus on the negatives of his experience of being stereotyped and discriminated against, Scooter brought an unexpected perspective to this topic in his photo-elicitation project. Having taken pictures of both a dumpster and a piece of feces, he unpacked his symbolism by relaying,

All of the stereotypes and everything else is that's what they put you as. Is a piece of crap.... You're much lower than them and everything else. But they don't see the potential of what that can do.... Me being in this situation, and the things coming right, I can actually help the society and help the community and everything else once I get back on my feet, because I've been there, done that.

Such a refrain around how others have held an impactful and oppressive view of him that overlooks his potential was woven throughout Scooter's narrative. The love and success he experienced earlier in life let him know he was deserving of better treatment and dignity. As he put it, "I know it's not the life for me. I know, by truly in my heart that it's not the life for me. I know I can have better." He added, "And I know that I've been working to try to get better. But it's just, it seems like I cannot get that foothold that I need." Scooter noted the repeated letdowns and disappointments could add up and take a toll on him. He shared that he struggles at times with questioning his faith, getting discouraged, and feeling helpless, stating he sometimes can "get kind of ignorant when I'm frustrated at people ... I try to do the best for people ... I try to offer help to people, but I would wish that they would help me." For someone who prides himself on his self-sufficiency and work ethic, it was all the more challenging for him when such efforts did not always garner positive results. As he put it,

I'm trying to do what's right. And that's what's the most frustrating.... I'm not out there robbing people, I'm not out there trying to sell drugs, I'm not out there trying to do anything illegal or anything else. I'm trying to go out there and do

the right thing. And stay, try to stay positive and motivated, but it's just real hard. It seems ... like you go out and two steps on the ladder, get kicked down four.

Despite having to repeatedly bounce back from various setbacks, Scooter's faith, resourcefulness, ability to humble himself by turning to others for help, and creative outlook have all helped him cultivate enough hope to get by and try to stave off negativistic thinking. In describing his desire to not focus on being negative all the time, he said, "I can't be like that because I'm in a hard spot. I need a little bit of help. I can't do it just by myself. You know? So I gotta humble myself to be able to accept help. And I can't do it if I'm negative." Scooter even gathered sources of inspiration from his surrounding environment as he described the nearby street art he captured (see Figure 9): "Which if you look around it, there ain't much living anywhere around the tree, but the tree is actually still alive and it's still living. Which gives it hope."



Figure 9. Scooter photo 2.

At the same time, given the handful of injuries Scooter has endured while on the job in the past, he also struggled to justify accepting some temporary job opportunities

that pose the risk of permanent bodily harm for low compensation and no protection to speak of. In describing this, he said,

I'll tell you the truth, my body for being 36 years old, my body is tore up. Just from like living in garages, and under bridges, and you know, wherever I could lay my head. And the drugs, the heavy drugs I took when I was younger. Being 36, I feel like I'm 56.... Really the only option is day labor. So I'm out there, destroying my body even worse to where it might permanently get hurt. For eight dollars? Nah.

With the current job market, likely hiring discrimination, and present circumstances making it challenging for him to fully support himself, Scooter shared he really just wanted to complete his education so he could obtain a job where he could afford a simple life and help others in the end: "And so I would like to go back to school, and finish up my degree, so I can be better equipped for a better job. I don't want to be a forklift operator all my life, you know?"

In truth, he shared he found it unfair that his experiences and the trust he had garnered from his fellow employees did not speak to his job qualifications: "Well one thing I've noticed nowadays, is even if you've got 18 years experience, you're not going to get paid well unless you got the degree behind it." Yet with education, Scooter found himself constantly battling between short-term responsibilities and longer-term aspirations that could help better his situation in the long run. Although he might want to complete his degree, Scooter indicated he faced barriers to education: partly on account of how much time was consumed by his job search process, partly from a lack of knowledge around navigating the system of higher education, and partly due to feeling discriminated against based on his circumstances. With frustration, Scooter recalled his first experience with trying to get himself back into college:

They found out I was in transitional housing and now I can no longer be accepted to their school because I don't have access to a computer. When I brought up the laptop, and they said "well that's only if you're accepted in our program and we can't accept you in transitional housing." So in other words, we don't want you to go pawn the laptop off or whatever is what it was.

While Scooter had in fact obtained a job prior to our last contact, he fully recognized he would need to "follow a straight and narrow path" moving forward. Although challenged and often lonely, he emphasized the importance of staying positive, not getting distracted, maintaining faith, and never giving up. A nearby alleyway he regularly passes by (see Figure 10) helped Scooter remind himself of this purpose:

If I keep dwelling on the negatives that's happened to me, such as the company not calling me because I'm in here, or college, or, uh, you know if I keep dwelling on them instead of going out and looking for another job, instead of going to another college and seeing what they can do for me, and how that school can better me, if I allowed them, see when I was younger I would really allow them to negatively affect me.... But now, it, it's, I can't let that negativity bother me now, because I had, I, if I'm negative, the people see the negative in me.



Figure 10. Scooter photo 3.

DeBroncos

DeBroncos is a 49-year-old Caucasian man who received his associate's degree in Travel, was born and raised in the Rocky Mountain region, and loves football--thus the pseudonym. When I first began interacting with DeBroncos, I noticed he routinely wore Broncos team gear with sunglasses affixed atop his head and looked somewhat older than his stated years. In conversation, he was polite, friendly, and animated, though he often required supportive redirection when overly tangential or fixated on minutiae in his storytelling. DeBroncos was not initially selected to participate by virtue of random selection but he was receptive, flexible, and eager to join in once an additional opening emerged. He appeared open with me but struggled with eye contact at times, likely due

to his mental health concerns. DeBroncos noted partway into the interview process that he has struggled with hearing voices and was actively engaged with a visual hallucination at times during the interview process. DeBroncos acknowledged he was mostly aware these were not real but still struggled at times and was in the process of trying to seek out appropriate help.

While unemployed at the time of the interview, DeBroncos was attempting to apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) in light of both his physical and mental health concerns. Just prior to our second interview, he informed me with a heavy sigh that he would have to leave the shelter that evening because he had not met the program's requirement for obtaining employment. During my time collaborating with him, DeBroncos was in the midst of his second episode of homelessness and had been homeless for one and a half years. Having been homeless for around four years of his life altogether, previous homelessness episodes were connected to matters related to being unemployed while serving as a caregiver for his grandmother and later his mother. Upon hearing his story, it would be easy to focus on the negatives and his ongoing mental health concerns. Yet for DeBroncos, he felt hopeful, capable, and in a better position to get the help he needed as a result of his time at the shelter.

A boy without a father. DeBroncos said he experienced a sense of rejection early in life when his father deserted the family. In some ways, this might have been for the best because DeBroncos felt he was "stronger" on account of growing up without his father. He also might have been in harm's way by having him around; DeBroncos noted his father broke his arm at the age of two while roughhousing. Although able to reframe the absence of his father, DeBroncos also had sadness in his voice as he shared, "I wasn't

in the respected family of father, mother, and the kids. But I think I, I think I'm stronger for it. You know, I didn't have a relationship with my father because, you know, he didn't want me." After his father left, DeBroncos mainly grew up in a nearby city living with his mother, two older siblings, and maternal grandparents.

He described his upbringing as being heavily influenced by his grandmother and mother with whom he had a loving and very strict childhood. On the one hand, he felt his family was supportive as he "had [his] freedoms" and they were "tight-knitted" as a family. Although he would play sports and games with neighborhood kids and friends, DeBroncos noted his mother liked having all her children home and accounted for in time for viewing the 10 o'clock news together. On the other hand, expectations for behavior were strict and morally grounded in religious beliefs that were heavily influenced by his involvement in the same church since the age of seven. DeBroncos recalled being made to participate in "scared straight" at age 15 and one instance when his grandmother literally had him wash his mouth out with lye soap on account of him having sworn because he was angered by his father's attempt to finally make some sort of contact. As he summed up this dynamic, DeBroncos relayed,

It was like, she was a disciplinarian I would say. And she learned that from her father and she taught it to me. I'm like, or she showed it more to me. And I think that's where I have more, I had, or I feel I have more respect for my grandmother and my mother, and was able to step in and be their caretakers at their times of need, when they needed a caretaker.... Some people say that could be the hindrance right there. I think it shaped me into the man that I am right now. And given my respect for everything.

Beyond the experiences with his immediate family, DeBroncos' childhood was somewhat marred by a variety of physical injuries and ailments as well as mental health concerns. After being hit by a truck at the age of seven, he had his mouth wired shut for

a period of time and said he had to “re-learn English and learn how to write again.”

DeBroncos believed this might have also contributed to his shyness as well as his difficulties with stuttering and struggling at times to find words to express himself.

Between these difficulties and his experiences of abandonment with his father, DeBroncos also appeared to struggle at times with change or endings of relationships.

He gave an example of having been depressed for a three-month period in second grade, disclosing that he “went to pieces” after a friend moved away. Despite these various concerns, DeBroncos felt he had a loving, supported, and fairly mild-mannered childhood. He maintained some friendships and was close with his siblings with whom he generally got along. DeBroncos even recalled having made a pledge with his sister at the age of 10 to never use illicit substances, sharing that “we said we would never smoke because we didn’t want the dirty habit that our uncle had.” Being the honest and dedicated person he is, DeBroncos has maintained that pledge to this day.

Disappointment and perseverance. Having already missed out on having his father as a male role model, it was a big setback for DeBroncos when his grandfather died. DeBroncos was 13-years-old at the time and had to cope with not only his own feelings of grief and loss but also the emergence of psychotic symptoms (i.e., hearing voices and experiencing a recurrent visual hallucination). The manner in which these mental health concerns were handled appeared to have been a major turning point in DeBroncos’ life. Based on his recounting of events, it seems he experienced a lack of adequate assessment and care in addition to being impacted by others’ beliefs and naiveté around mental health concerns. He shared,

My grandmother didn’t feel that was the thing to do. She thought, oh you can go talk to the pastor. He suggested the shrink. So I went to the psycho, psychiatrist,

and he goes, “Oh, he’s 13, he’ll grow out of it.” And after my grandmother heard, oh he’s only 13 he’ll grow out of it, she goes, “No more. Well, we’ll live with it.” I go, “Oh, me? How about me?” She goes, “Well yeah, you’ll have to live with it, but we’re going to keep it hidden.’ But age 20, for some reason age 20 until, I’d say 46, they kind of went away. It wasn’t as bad.

With a heavy sigh, DeBroncos recalled that while difficult, he had learned to resign himself to the likelihood of having to cope with some symptoms of psychosis throughout his life. In light of the recent resurgence of these symptoms, DeBroncos shared, “This was, is something I have to deal with. I’ve looked at it this way, probably all my life, well since I was 13. Well, I guess somehow I’ll have to deal with it and get through.”

Although struggling with poorly treated mental health concerns and the loss of his grandfather, some positive support did come from his participation in the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program and having regular contact with male mentors from his church: “The mentors were, they were a fill-in for my grandfather. And I would say also for my father.... I actually had a man, a man I could go to, and he would take time to be with me.” Later on in life, DeBroncos felt his experience with several mentors and some other relationships over the years helped him learn he needed people in his life even if the relationships themselves might change. He appeared to feel that lesson most poignantly now that he was homeless and recognized he could not make it entirely on his own.

These various positive adult attachments appeared to have helped provide DeBroncos with a buffer to his existing concerns and helped support him as he navigated the trials and tribulations of adolescence. For instance, while talented as an ambidextrous quarterback, DeBroncos had to deal with the disappointment of not getting to play in high school when his grandmother elected to have him enroll in a private high school. While he would have been satisfied playing basketball instead, his difficulties with asthma and

chronic bronchitis that were diagnosed at the time soon proved to be a barrier. He noted the decision to have him go to private school was due to his older sister's rebellious behavior, which their grandmother ascribed to her public school attendance. DeBroncos shared that when he was 16, his sister's behavior ultimately got her kicked out of the house after which she distanced herself entirely for a 10-year period. DeBroncos felt this as a shift in his family: "I think after our sister was kicked out of the house and gone for 10 years, it kind of went whack."

Although DeBroncos was disappointed by his change in schools, loss of organized sports as an outlet, and estranged relationship his sister, he managed to persevere in other areas. In addition to maintaining a three-year dating relationship throughout high school, DeBroncos was proud to share that he "graduated almost top of my class. Put it this way, valedictorian and salutatorian, and the third person, there were three points between." He even noted he still had the medal he received from his accolades there. DeBroncos was also delighted by having been selected as a teacher's assistant in their cooking class, having developed the general cooking and budgetary skills that would help him as a caretaker and part-time cook in the future. Barring a minor, non-prosecuted attempt he made at shoplifting on a dare from a friend, DeBroncos was proud of his lack of criminal record of any sort. DeBroncos appeared to light up whenever describing some of his prior accomplishments.

A failure to launch. With his older brother left for the Navy and his sister was kicked out by the time he graduated high school, DeBroncos began to feel the pull to be the responsible sibling who stayed around to help. DeBroncos attempted to join the Air Force but was turned down due to his flat feet. Instead, he earned his associate's degree

in Travel just out of high school. Yet, he continued to remain at home. Noting his gratitude for what his grandmother offered him and his siblings, he relayed, “She helped us through while we were children. She changed our diapers. She got us milk and cookies. She got us, you know, stuff like that. It was, she needs us now. I said okay. It didn’t phase me.” Although others might have judged his failure to launch from home, having stayed there until his early 40s, he took the gradual shift in responsibilities and roles in stride:

They had respect for me and I had, of course I had the utmost respect for my mother and my grandmother.... The pastor of our church said she coddled me. She may have. But, I think she either knew something was going to happen that she needed someone, or she would, she was concerned that, well, “If I kick him out now, what happens to me if I have, if I fall? I won’t have anyone be around.” I think she knew my mother was still there but it was like, I need a guy around in my life. So I don’t have my husband, but my daughter, she’s sick, because my mom did have epilepsy.... We couldn’t really tell when she was going to have one of her seizures.... She didn’t know when that was going to happen. And she needed someone there, this is what she told me, she needed someone there to watch and help and you know, run the house, so, I guess that’s why I stayed.

DeBroncos struggled with becoming more fully autonomous due to his strong connections to family but he realized these connections were reciprocal: “I don’t have really any hard feelings toward my grandmother really for keeping me at home. But I know I, I know why she did it, because she didn’t, she didn’t want to be alone.”

Although understanding, DeBroncos indicated he could not help but feel a little resentful when he wonders what life might have been like if he had been forced to work, develop skills, and leave the home sooner. Reflecting on this, he expressed,

I think that if she had, I probably would have been able to make it. Because at that time I didn’t have all the bad debt, and I think I could have, if she had let me go out on my own, I probably could have made it. But she didn’t want that, she wanted me and my brother to stay around the house. Help with the house, help with the animals. And you know, so we did that. Now I’m thinking, I’m like,

“Why didn’t you kick us out when I was 20 years old?” I could have probably made it here. Or made it better.

Part of DeBroncos’ confidence came from his prior successes in life on top of having managed various responsibilities along the way while living at home. DeBroncos held one job for an eight-year period, another for four, and regularly held a babysitting position for the neighbors’ kids over the years. DeBroncos shared he took pride in his role and responsibilities there.

The disappointment of “Mrs. Right.” In his mid-30s, DeBroncos started dating a girlfriend who in his mind had marriage potential: “Well, I had one girlfriend that I actually thought was going to be Mrs. Right. Or Mrs. Right for me.” Although he had not really dated since high school, DeBroncos found himself in a six-year relationship wherein he had been welcomed by her family and they had started planning for a wedding. Things were going relatively well until the night he had planned to propose to her--on her birthday.

Per DeBroncos, his former girlfriend was an exotic dancer and 10 years younger than he, reasons for which he believed she was not truly ready to settle down with him. Because of the party he had been ditched for, his then girlfriend found herself caught up in a situation that involved a drug bust, leading to her arrest and prison sentencing. Even one to feel responsible for those he was attached to, DeBroncos still showed up at court and helped ensure her prison sentence was reduced. DeBroncos said he was heartbroken by this incident, noting he has never really dated since; he still finds himself being reminded of as well as thinking and talking about her. He noted it was especially hard when she was eventually released from prison and wound up dating someone else. With sadness and much halting in his voice, he described how he has been trying to cope with

this loss still: “Try to write about her, write about it, try to move on, but it’s a little hard right now. I know she’s in the past, but, and I know I need to get over her, but it’s so hard!”

A caregiver’s burden and first-time homelessness. Shortly after his former girlfriend was arrested, DeBroncos’ grandmother became sick with dementia and he found himself involved in an even more intensive caregiver role. For a year and a half, he took care of all the banking and “did the housework, took care of the dog, took care of the cat, I fed her, I got meals for my brother and myself, I did the laundry, I even did the grocery shopping, I got the mail.” Responsibilities at home suddenly occupied most of his time and focus. DeBroncos’ grandmother got her wish of not wanting to die alone as both he and his brother were there at her deathbed. As he recalled, “So I go upstairs, and she had passed. I even had to close her eyes.... But the last thing I remember of her was hearing her death rattle.” This memory still lingered with him.

Having not worked in order to take care of his grandmother, DeBroncos, his brother, and his mother were suddenly homeless when the bank took over the house. Fortunately, through their connections in the faith community, they were able to stay at a place affiliated with their church. Although he would volunteer and engage in some part-time security work, often working hard, long hours and picking up shifts where he could, DeBroncos was eventually deemed a liability and had to leave after three years. DeBroncos explained that since his part-time work was not reliable and low paying, over time, the church shelter staff “found me a liability instead of an asset. They found me as a liability. So I ended up on the street.”

Once again finding himself in unstable and unfamiliar territory, good fortune struck when a community member reached out to him with a unique opportunity. This woman's son worked for a nearby hotel through which they were able to arrange for DeBroncos to receive a free month-long stay to get back on his feet. Better still, DeBroncos said he was able to have his stay "parlayed" into a six-month stay through making small payments to the hotel. Around this time, DeBroncos' mother's health took a turn for the worst as it was discovered she was now struggling with signs of Alzheimer's disease. Partly out of charitable kindness and partly out of respect for DeBroncos' work ethic and positive attitude, DeBroncos received an extra bonus from work and money back from the hotel. With this money in hand, DeBroncos was able to reunite with his mother and live comfortably for a period of time.

A caregiver's loss and a return to homelessness. For DeBroncos, comfort referred more to stability than material possession but he was appreciative nonetheless: "I didn't have a bed to sleep in, but I had a recliner chair that folded out to be a comfortable bed to myself I thought. It was like, this is comfortable." It was in this manner that DeBroncos found himself now acting as a caregiver for his mother while her functioning slowly declined due to her Alzheimer's disease. DeBroncos' care for his mother was evident as he noted he was willing to endure physical violence from her as her disease set in. In this manner, two years passed before his mother eventually needed a higher level of care and ended up being placed in a nursing home.

Prior to finding himself homeless again upon his mother's departure for the nursing home, DeBroncos met a young boy with whom he had served in a mentor capacity since 2011. When he first met this youth and became acquainted with his

family, DeBroncos helped him learn to read and feel positive about himself. DeBroncos found himself identifying with this young boy, noting he too struggled with health concerns and abandonment from his father. This connection appeared to be meaningful and important for DeBroncos given his identification with him; he derived a sense of joy from any small role he played in the boy's accomplishments and happiness.

Shortly after his mother left for the nursing home, DeBroncos received word that his father had passed away. In addition to dealing with this news and his mother's failing health, he found himself once again contending with homelessness. Although able to stay for a brief period of time with a family affiliated with his church as well as with a step program, DeBroncos has been consistently homeless since October 2012. Reflecting on his continued abstinence from substance use, he shared,

I'm now thankful that I can say I've been out here almost, well October would be two years, and still haven't picked up any of the drugs, smoking, or anything like that, or the drinking. I don't need it. It's not gonna make my life any better, it won't make my life any worse. But I don't, I know I don't need any of it. And I'm really glad I don't need any of that.

Homeless and out of connections to turn to, DeBroncos found himself trying to navigate the world by himself. He shared he had negative experiences with some of the overnight shelters in town, particularly with one across the street from the transitional shelter he was staying at during the time of the interview (see Figure 11).



Figure 11. DeBroncos photo 1.

In describing his experience with the other shelter, he explained, “I’m sorry, but, it’s a place that they say they can help people, but it kind of deters people more so than any.” DeBroncos shared that in addition to disliking the substance abuse that took place there and the instability incurred through the overnight placements, he detested how staff over there could be bossy and let power get to their heads: “Yeah, they get to see how being the guard is, and it seems like that’s what their mentality is. ‘Oh, now I’m in charge! And you have to listen to me.’ It’s like, ughhh.” As such, DeBroncos found himself spending much time between various shelters, on his own, or choosing to stay out in the elements to avoid the negative environment of the overnight shelter: “Every once in a while I would stay at, basically stay out on the street through the night.”

A year to the day after hearing word of his father’s death, DeBroncos’ mother passed away in the nursing home. DeBroncos was ultimately responsible for handling all of her affairs following her death. He owned he had some feelings of resentment toward his brother and sister for not being around to help when she was sick, not visiting her in the nursing home, and not helping out in the aftermath of her death:

I guess I'm a little upset with them.... Because after our mother passed away, I had to set up her memorial service. Aaaaand, all by myself. And also, take care of all of herself. Without anyone's help. Nothing from my brother and nothing from my sister. It's like, "Thanks guys." Leave me home, taking care of mom.

DeBroncos shared he recently saw his brother from afar but did not reach out to say hello due to lingering feelings of bitterness: "He's the one who turned his back on me, I didn't turn my back on him." He shared he has since come to realize that by holding onto such feelings, he is ultimately turning his back on his brother as well.

Lost in voices and wanting connection. Over time, the additive nature of his losses and the stress of life on the street appeared to have begun to take a toll on DeBroncos. Referencing two months prior to my contact with him, he shared, "I mean January I was in the hospital. Found out I have an aneurism in the back of my brain." This was right around the time DeBroncos got into the transitional shelter. He noted his voices and hallucinations had begun to resurface since then, often impacting him at inopportune times such as during a job interview. Although difficult, DeBroncos has tried to stay positive and focused on his goals: "Instead of looking at it to the bad. Looking at it towards the good." He shared he had simple goals related to getting himself off the street but acknowledged, "With this, uh, not being able to work, or even my voices I'm hearing now, or again, it's like, 'They went away, it was so nice tucked away.'"

Fortunately, DeBroncos shared he had a shelter friend who encouraged him to seek out psychiatric help. He said this had led to his recent experience of going to the "psych ward. Kept me there for overnight. Observation. And they gave me all the paperwork. And they told me, first thing Monday morning, go and apply for A and D, and everything." Realizing he had not had much success pursuing short-term job options, DeBroncos noted this time around he has been more willing to look into disability

benefits as a means of seeking greater stability. With a laugh, he reflected, “It’s been a learning experience. It probably will stay a learning experience, because I had to learn today to wait, be patient, and that one’s not the easiest thing to do.”

DeBroncos also felt fortunate because of the consistency and welcoming staff he was afforded at the current shelter: “Right now I’m finding more and more stability being here than being out on the streets. Because it feels like a home.” For DeBroncos, part of this sense of home stemmed from having some familiar faces at the shelter. He shared that his experiences have taught him to appreciate without becoming overly attached:

I think they’ve shown me that I need to, I need to include people in my life, but I don’t need that many friends. But I do, it’s like I have a relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord, I’ve gotta build that up. To me, it’s like I have friends here, but it’s like they’re not really, you know they’re, friends come and go. And they’ve, it’s helped me, those relationships have helped me think, “Oh I don’t have to hold onto this guy.”

For DeBroncos, having a sense of connection, belonging, and community had always been important to him. While homeless, he had met these needs from some familiar faces, the stability of the shelter, his role as a mentor, contact with his faith community, as well as through frequenting local libraries. DeBroncos took images of several libraries he utilized, capturing his favorite below (see Figure 12). In describing this space, he said, “This is my, I would say my favorite library. Because I would say it’s the smaller of the three. And I just, I like it. It’s like, you know they make you feel welcome.”



Figure 12. DeBroncos photo 2.

Whether the library was big or small, DeBroncos appreciated when he was known and welcomed by the staff there, could seek out privacy to his own degree, and was not micromanaged. Libraries also represented a safe haven: “With me it’s the place that I can disconnect from the world and all my fears.”

While DeBroncos had previously hoped to alleviate his fear of getting kicked out of the shelter by meeting their requirement for employment, this simply was not the case. He had temporarily hoped his application for SSDI might have sufficed but discovered he would have to leave the shelter. DeBroncos acknowledged, “I’ll miss this place. And it makes me a little sad. Not to the point that it’s, that it might put me into depression, but just, I’ve gotten used to being here.” Despite this news, DeBroncos said he was trying to keep his head up, draw on his faith, and focus instead on how to be resourceful and creative moving forward:

I’m praying for the best. And I’m like, I feel this is, you know, stability that I haven’t had in the last year and a half. Now this time I got stability in my life and I’m like, “You know, I can actually do this, I can really.” But even if it is taken away, I know I’ll look back and see, okay, I did have it, and now I know I can get it and feel good about myself and I can move on. And I can get my, if I have to

go to a group home and talk to a therapist for six months to a year, okay! I'll go to the group home. And right there is going to be stability.

Although he might be leaving the physical space itself, DeBroncos felt he would be able to take away a sense of hope for his future. Based on his time growing within the stability of the shelter community, he shared,

I can see that I can have it and be stable, be a part of the community even if it's not this community, or just the community out there. I know I can take it, I can go through, and it's gonna take a while, but I can get on my feet again like I did these last two months. If I can do it here, I probably can do it out there too.

Jade

Jade is a 34-year-old Caucasian, married mother of three with German and Choctaw tribal roots who received her GED and completed nearly two years of college, having pursued a degree in the social sciences. Her present situation had Jade separated from her husband and children across state lines. When I first began interacting with Jade, I noticed her summery attire, piercing and studying gaze, and the cross affixed around her neck. Beyond outward appearances, Jade was positive and agreeable throughout the interview, if not apologetic for being so talkative, and occasionally choosing to hold back some tears. During my time collaborating with her, Jade was in the midst of her first episode of homelessness and had been homeless for one and a half months. Jade was unique in that while her circumstances were certainly influenced by terms of her parole, she felt like she was choosing to be homeless as her available housing options would place her in at-risk, substance abusing environments. Although she just recently became employed part-time doing landscaping work at the time of the interview, Jade was going to be leaving the shelter shortly to begin therapy at an inpatient residential treatment center as part of a condition of her parole. As such, she was eager to

expedite the process but this did not diminish her enthusiasm for and encouragement of this research. In fact, Jade was the one to reach out to me to initiate the member-check process, sharing the following via e-mail: “Just so you know...my life has changed for the good...I have a job making good moneyI rent from really awesome people...I am going forward in life....so definitely keep in touch.” While Jade has lived through many challenging life events, she has chosen to adopt a largely accepting, appreciative lens wherein she focuses on lessons she learned and how experiences have helped shape the person she is today.

A child divided. “I was a good, I was good, I was a good person, good, you know? Vulnerable. Innocent. I can’t imagine what I was like back then.” After her parents divorced when she was two-years-old, Jade relayed, “My mother is the one that raised me. My dad has been in and out of prison my whole life.... My dad is like the bad seed and my mom’s the good seed.” Jade has spent a lot of her life battling to define who she is, viewing her mother as positive, her father as negative, and struggling to find herself somewhere in-between.

Although she might not have appreciated her mother to the same extent while growing up, Jade has come to have much admiration and respect for her mothers’ work ethic, strong-willed and moral nature, as well as her religious roots: “It was a good home. Like she cooked every, she, she’s an awesome mom.... And she still is, yeah.” Jade felt somewhat stifled by her mother’s approach to parenting while growing up but did not blame her mother and defended her in retrospect: “So I think that she was rather strict, but she also, you know, my dad was a totally opposite and she had, you know, some rebellious from me.” Indeed, Jade struggled at times with holding disparate views from

her mother, which ultimately influenced her desire to “rebel”; yet she holds a far more appreciative lens of her mother now: “That’s pretty much who she is, but she’s awesome, she’s very, she’s a spiritual, beautiful, you know, seen together, she’s the reason why I’m a good person, because she raised me, you know what I mean?”

Jade’s “inward journey” to self-discovery was complicated by her mother’s subsequent marriages and divorces, comparing herself negatively to her half-siblings and the sporadic and adverse influence of her substance-abusing father. Her first stepfather married her mother when Jade was 11. She described him as a generally okay man who would often argue with her mother but “he tried really hard to instill in us what was right and wrong.” Jade contrasted herself as the “bad seed” compared to her siblings, noting her older brother eventually became a principal and her younger brother struggled with heart problems in childhood. Meanwhile, her second stepfather entered the scene when Jade was in early adulthood. Although he and her mother also engaged in some “dysfunctional” communication patterns, Jade appreciated her exposure to the family mortuary business, living in a new city, and the financial stability this meant for her mother. Yet it was her father’s long absences, efforts to put her down, and negative lifestyle that was the most distressing and confusing of all: “My dad that was the most traumatic thing in my life, is to be trying to gain this acceptance from a dad I never knew, and then for him to be so evil to me, and trying to overcome that and find who I am, um, that was hugely traumatic.”

Despite all of this, Jade generally grew up viewing herself as good, albeit confused and somewhat rebellious. Growing up in a small town where everyone knew everyone, Jade said she felt taken care of and self-sufficient with regard to community.

Jade did well and excelled at school without having to try too hard. As she still had an interest in returning to school, it came as no surprise when Jade shared, “I liked school. I like it a lot, I loved to learn.” Jade also had positive experiences with music, sports, and church camps while growing up, achieving and receiving praise for her efforts while coming to enjoy having something to which she could fully dedicate herself. Some of Jade’s current self-efficacy was founded on such previous successes, some of which (i.e., vocal and academic performance) earned her a college scholarship. In retrospect, Jade was both heartened and saddened by her prior successes as she knew she was capable but could not help wonder what she might have missed out on: “So I’ve excelled a lot and missed a lot of opportunities too, so yeah...”

Jade felt family and church were the most influential in shaping her, noting she did not feel she interfaced as much with the community until later in life, especially now that she finds herself lacking resources of her own. In addition to her mother and the adverse influence of her father, her maternal grandfather was also an impactful figure in Jade’s upbringing. Jade routinely spent time on the weekends with her grandfather engaging in constructive activities together. Jade found her grandfather to be an inspiration and served as an example of overcoming adversity as he overcame losing an arm after being run over by a semi-truck at the age of 13:

My grandpa was somebody I admire because he’s very successful and has been.... went like 100% like from his adversity.... I admire him, totally. And I love him, he was really strict like with um Christian things, and now I can just listen to him and be like, “okay, grandpa,” but I don’t have to argue because he has his ways and I have mine.

While Jade ultimately felt she lost her way for a large stretch of her life, she cited the fact that her mother and grandfather never gave up on her as being highly influential and meaningful.

Rebelling, losses, and substance use. Partially due to disliking the strictness of her Christian upbringing and partially due to the adverse influence of her father exposing her to a different lifestyle, Jade began to have a period of rebelling in early adulthood. Describing this, Jade relayed,

Pretty much she raised me in church, like really religious when I was younger. And, like, you know, I'd see my dad here and there, so when I was about 17 or 18, that's when I rebelled and was like "pshh." So, um, and I am, I went from you know, going to church all the time to witchcraft, like Wicca.

Jade began experimenting with marijuana use around this same time period, which complicated her path to self-discovery. Reflecting back on this time, Jade expressed, "I was confused. You know? Um, I, I, um, spiritually confused." Yet she attributed part of this confusion to her dad's influence and her desire to gain his approval, noting he introduced her to a "different life, especially when you go into a dope-dealing dad world. Here, that's a totally different world.... It's very dark.... So I've been to the light and the dark, both, so, I just, it's made me who I am." Yet the closer she tried to get to her father, the further she got away from her spiritual roots: "Whenever I was smoking and, drinking, I wasn't, I mean I still prayed, but I wasn't like focused on doing the right thing, doing the right choices."

Jade's identity struggles, spiritual confusion, and substance use were further complicated by the death of her best friend in a tragic car accident. Jade recalled with some sadness and a hint of self-blame, "When I was 19 my best friend died. We switched places, um, in a car wreck, right before that happened.... I've had a lot of

traumatic things happen to me.” Between missing the approval and love from her father and needing to cope with difficult and traumatic losses such as the death of her best friend, Jade began to turn to substances to help fill the hole in her heart. While it has been a long journey, Jade’s ability to navigate, develop, and lean on her own integrated spirituality has led her to the more adaptive coping strategies she utilizes today. However, this journey has continued to be arduous and rocky at times, requiring various experiences to help her gain her current perspective on life.

Intermittent relationships and intermittent sobriety. Jade has yet to complete her undergraduate education due in part to her substance use and period of rebelling and in part due to exploring a variety of life experiences with her “first love.” Jade had her first child by her “first love” at the age of 21. She shared this relationship was on and off for about a six-year period and it was very challenging for her to break it off in the end. Shortly after having her first child, Jade followed her recently remarried mother out to the Great Plains. Once there, she ended up working off and on in her stepfather’s mortuary business; at this point, she was successful with sobriety for two years: “And I was also sober for two years.... I worked the program, Alcoholics Anonymous, it’s some of the best times I’ve had.”

Yet in general, Jade’s 20s into her early 30s marked a period of slightly heavier substance use with intermittent periods of sobriety and intermittent relational involvements. She attributed part of this to her outgoing nature and initial innocence: “Because I’m a definite people person, like I can, like you know, I like to talk to people, but that held me back a little bit because it got me in situations and bad choices.” In some ways, Jade was not entirely surprised that upon reconnecting with this partner a few

years back, she found herself pregnant with her now one-year-old third child. This happened while Jade was separated from though still married to her husband, the father of her second child. Jade met her husband in her late 20s, got married, and had a child with him when she was 29. After about a year of marriage, Jade found herself feeling somewhat trapped and wanting certain freedoms or so she initially believed. She recalled, “This is the life I had before, like whatever, I was married I would, um, and I had my kids, I wanted to have those little freedoms of going down, singing, having that lifestyle. And that lifestyle hindered me.” In describing her husband and the impact her choices had on their relationship, Jade relayed,

My husband, he’s the best person, like he’s so awesome! And like, I didn’t really, like, appreciate him when I left him. And so, um, I don’t know, they’re just, they’re still in my life, both of them are, I have children by both of them, so and I talk to my husband daily.... He’s scared because I’m his first love and he doesn’t want to get hurt anymore. Like he doesn’t want to be hurt because I must have hurt him really bad, you know? By leaving him.

However, it was not just her desire for “freedom” that led to leaving her husband behind. Jade’s father had been in prison throughout her 20s, had recently been released, and was living in his hometown in the Rocky Mountain region.

Trying to rescue dad. With her father out of prison, her wanting to reconnect with and try to “save” him, and finding herself hungry for autonomy of her own, Jade found herself moving away from her husband to the Rocky Mountain region. And so Jade came to the area to try to have a relationship with her father because she still loved him and believed she could be a positive influence in his life. Unfortunately for Jade, she found her efforts met with disappointment after disappointment. Instead of having a positive influence on her father, she found herself yet again being adversely influenced by him, his substance abuse, and the negative crowds with whom he was affiliated.

If anything, these experiences with her father helped Jade figure out who she was: “I had to make my choice, here’s my mother and here’s my dad, and they’re total opposites, so you know, I had to figure out which one I was. And I’m not my dad.” Yet even after her father ended up back in prison for another sentence, Jade still has not given up on him entirely. Reflecting back on this complex relationship, Jade shared,

My dad and me, my dad is now, he’s lucky I talk to him.... He’s put me through hell.... When I was younger he’d come here and there and we’d go out to eat and blah, blah, blah, and I would be like bringing home like weed and be like “mom, what’s this?” Or, you know? He had a totally different lifestyle than mine, so it was a fight with my mom and dad about me if I could go there or not, or, you know, paying child support or whatever. Um, but when I like I said, when I moved here I started to know who he was and he’s not a good person really.... He’s like about money, power, sex, dope hos, just being honest.... So I had to get some acceptance of who he is, and I couldn’t save him, because I tried to save him.... And it didn’t work. But um he put me into a lot of dangerous situations. So he’s a very selfish person, now he’s in prison doing 10 years.... But I still love him, he’s my dad, you know, so.... I gave up trying to be in his life because I’m not trying to get caught up because of him, you know, it’s what he’s doing.... But I didn’t give up on him as a person, and who he is, that I know that I, when he’s not all whatever.

The incident and learning experiences. Struggling to reconnect with her father and being surrounded by negative influences were not the only challenges Jade faced. Jade had found herself living with a man temporarily. In hindsight, she wished she had trusted her intuition and not trusted this man. Suspecting this individual might have harmed her child, Jade proceeded to “beat this guy up because of it.” This incident led to Jade receiving a felony “menacing” charge, which resulted in her going to prison for a few weeks, spending nearly two years in a halfway house, and serving a probationary term that was complicated by a DUI incident. While Jade does not have many regrets in her life, she would have chosen to avoid this man, handled the incident differently, and saved her much heartache. The circumstances of her charge have her serving her

probationary period in the Rocky Mountain region and separated from her husband and children back in the Great Plains barring the completion of her treatment and the approval of an interstate transfer.

Needless to say, this incident and the resulting charges really impacted Jade as she suddenly found her life changed without access to her car, her house, certain freedoms, and, most importantly, her kids:

Being a mom and then not being a mom at all. Like not cooking, not taking care of kids, having freedom, and then not having. That's like, bam, it's just, it, it's hard. It's a very hard thing. And then, you know, not being able to go back, because I'm on parole and it was over my son, I'm trying to protect my son.

Jade took accountability for her consequences, acknowledging she had been making poor choices and had bad priorities for a period of time: "I was making bad choices without, because my kids got taken away or whatever... and so I made bad choices trying to cover that rather than embracing it and facing it and just moving." Although regrettable in many respects, Jade has certainly learned a lot from her experiences of the past few years, no longer taking what she has for granted. Consistent with her attitude towards life experiences, she shared that she does not, "Think anything has ever really helped me or held me back, I think it's been all part of the process to make me who I am, because all these hardships have strengthened me." Additionally, she noted, "If I wouldn't have been through that, I wouldn't know what choices I don't want to make." With priorities intact, Jade shared she wants to do what it will take to regain custody of her children: "I don't give up on my kids."

Having been through some difficult and trying times, Jade has emerged stronger, has re-established her priorities, and is consistently choosing positive courses of action:

Now that I've seen a darker world, with darker things, and you know, more hard times being, you know, um, I'm more grateful and I'm more willing to not be around certain people because of certain situations.... I have no tolerance to be around people that are going to be influencing my life or with my kids, or anything.

Jade sees herself as presently “climbing back up.” This is partly due to Jade having arrived from her recent trials with greater humility and a greater self-awareness around who she is and the type of person she wants to be. Jade has found she is

more strong about who I am because it don't matter what people tell me, because I've been through, my dad put me down and tried to tell me who I was. I've learned I know I'm a good person, I know I'm this because I don't need you to tell me who I am, because I know who I am.

Choosing homelessness and putting herself “back together again.” Jade

shared, “It was a very scary situation being the fact that I have a family ... and I have a home I can't go to.” Jade had been supported financially while on parole by her mother but circumstances quickly changed in light of her mother's recent divorce. While Jade still has some extended family and contacts she could stay with in the area, she found herself choosing to stay at the shelter instead so as to avoid negative influences and environments marred by substance use. As Jade shared, “I do have family here and some people I know, but ... I choose to have sobriety, and I choose to be in a better place that I can be on a foundation.” Jade's children, her desire to not cause any more harm to her husband than she already has, and the prospect of returning to the Great Plains someday serve as strong motivators for her.

Hearing about the shelter through her involvement with AA, Jade recently found herself in a new and unfamiliar environment: “I've never been at this place in my life, like I've always had a car, my house, my kids, like all of it.” When describing what it was like for her to find herself homeless, Jade replied, “For me like at first, it was very

scary,” especially since she was separated from her family. With a hint of vulnerability restrained, Jade shared, “Emotionally that’s been the hard part with my kids. It’s been really hard emotionally.” Although she shared having some concerns around the potential for her belongings getting stolen and having difficulty with the lack of alone time, Jade said she was largely grateful and humbled to be at the shelter. Jade cited the stability, relative safety, help of the nice staff, basic needs assistance, financial assistance, accountability, and decreased potential of chaos as important factors. Since Jade has become very focused on making positive choices and positioning herself for success, the shelter has become an important resource for her at this time of transition:

The shelter being a foundation to where I can stay and be, and it’s a sober place rather than having to worry about what I’m surrounded by. Like I know that it’s safe here, that they are no tolerance for drugs.... And this is a structured place with accountability, and I like that because I don’t have to worry.

Jade’s current intentionality and desire to avoid negative influences were reflected not only in her actions but also in the images she chose to capture. Jade took numerous pictures of locations in the community that reminded her of her old lifestyle (e.g., a club scene, a liquor store, a pipe shop). She shared she has come to realize her old lifestyle and the “freedoms” she thought she wanted represented a failed attempt to fill a void in her heart, ultimately hindering and misleading her instead: “It was just the lifestyle, and going in and spending money on something that doesn’t ever fix this, what, the void that you’re trying to seek out.... and so I go to AA to not be in that lifestyle.”

While Jade has not entirely closed herself off to others, she definitely has become more selective in who she opens up to and has been prioritizing family and her spirituality above all else: “My purpose is my kids, and you know, God is my purpose too, like I have a purpose with, God is what makes me motivated.” This sentiment was

reflected in the picture she took of the three beads she wears on her wrist that represent each of her three children (see Figure 13).



Figure 13. Jade photo 1.

Given the negative encounters she has had throughout her life and within the current city where she finds herself, Jade appeared low on both trust and the desire for making new connections. Jade said her negative encounters in the community “makes me just stay in my own world, do my own thing, come back, and that’s it.... That’s why I don’t have time for a lot of people, because there’s not a lot of good people.” Describing her protective tendencies, Jade said, “I’m definitely still vulnerable in some aspects I’m sure. But I don’t like to let that, I’m in a shell.... So I’m more cautious.” Although such interpersonal cautiousness might normally hinder some, it appeared to help Jade filter out damaging relationships and keep the important and trustworthy ones close. Reflecting on the nature of relationships in general, Jade shared, “Things change.... But what’s real has gotten closer. What’s been not, it’s, I keep it away.”

Although Jade has been spiritual throughout her life, her recent experiences have brought on spiritual epiphanies of sorts for her. Rather than rebelling against the teachings of her childhood, Jade now tries to see her mother's and grandfather's wisdom while remaining skeptical and striving to seek out her own truth. Jade now sees God in the big and small things of life: at times with tangible reminders (see Figure 14), oftentimes in nature, and frequently upon reflection in making meaning and finding purpose in her experiences. For Jade, her spirituality serves as a source of comfort and protection, helps her establish goals, and better ensures she is on the right path in life.



Figure 14. Jade photo 2.

Currently, Jade is viewing her upcoming inpatient treatment work as an important part of her path to recovery and bouncing back. Recognizing her need for treatment and change, Jade finds herself engaging in greater self-accountability, seeking out empowerment via choices, and trying to use her difficult emotions to release her energy in a positive form. As Jade described it, "The road to pretty much recovery of life, not just recovery in AA, recovery in finding myself.... And if it wasn't for this shelter, I

wouldn't be able to do it. Like this shelter has definitely been a stepping-stone.” Jade shared she has been working hard to acknowledge and accept “I've been a pothead my whole life, but I can't do that no more.” To that end, she realized she needed to find alternative ways to feel better about herself rather than relying on “instant gratification.” Motivated by her spirituality, her family, and her desire to give back some day, Jade continues to stay positive and be helped by her ability to find purpose and meaning in her experiences:

Right now I'm without all my family and all that stuff, so I get to look at me and I get to work on me.... So it's a time to get my, to start loving who I am, you know, all that stuff I've been through and going through a lot of things... it's like picking the pieces up again and trying to, you know, put me back together again.

Christina

Christina is a 41-year-old female, multi-racial (i.e., French, American Indian—Sioux, and Spanish/Mexican) individual whose highest level of education is the seventh grade. While she would like to go back to school, she is focused on achieving greater stability first. Although unemployed at the time of our initial interviews, Christina had obtained part-time employment in the food service industry by the time we met for member-checking. During my time interacting with her, she was in the midst of her fourth or fifth episode of homelessness (approximately four years total) and had presently been homeless for five to six months. Her boyfriend was at another shelter space but was trying to join her at her current location. During the participant recruitment process, I found her to be assertive and charismatic although I was worried her seemingly impatient nature was reflective of a financially based motivation to participate. It turned out I could not have been further from the truth! She was forthcoming, engaged, and interested in the process. When speaking, Christina could fluctuate between moments of being very

composed and articulate to flashes of levity and child-like innocence matched with a grin that could easily overtake her face. Overall, Christina wanted to have the chance to share her story for the “right” reasons and challenge stereotypes. She strongly believed homeless should not call up images of people who are dirty or lazy but, rather, reference people who could be resourceful in the face of harsh circumstances and limited options.

Early days. Prior to her parents separating when she was five-years-old, life for Christina was pretty good. She was close with her parents and her grandmother and was particularly connected with one of her brothers. However, when her parents separated, the boys went with their father, Christina predominantly went to live with her mother, and things began to change: “We were like twins, you know, when we were younger. We just, we were just very, very close. But once I went with my mom and the boys went with dad things just kind of came apart.” Interestingly, Christina observed that over the years, she has had a tendency to seek out fatherly figures in her relationships; she connected this with the emotional distance she experienced with her father and the conflictual nature that often marked her relationship with her stepfather.

Things were not so bad at first when it was just Christina and her mother. She described her mother as having been positive and supportive throughout her early childhood: “My mom was great. My mom was the best. Even though we were poor, she was the best mom ever.” But with poverty came much instability of living; she suspected that such high mobility contributed to her difficulty in recalling much from her childhood: “My childhood was just kind of a blur, you know? Then there’s a certain couple things that I do remember, but a lot of it’s just a lot of moving around.” Despite

the challenges this presented for Christina and her mother at times, she said she has better understood her childhood instability in retrospect:

I think the moving around a lot wasn't very good for us. But it really wasn't her fault, you know, it wasn't her fault that she was not very educated and what not, you know? So, I mean I don't really blame her, for anything! You know? I don't blame my mom for anything, just she did the best she could, that's what I think. Truly and honestly, she did the best she could.

One of the other notable things Christina recalled from this period of her life was a nervous condition she had when she was about seven-years-old. While this health concern was difficult at times, it eventually dissipated but not before it created a permanent heart murmur. For most individuals, such a condition might be considered a drawback, which in many ways it has been for Christina. Yet, unexpectedly, her heart condition might have served to buffer her from engaging in heavier drug use as an adolescent and young adult. She said her heart condition helped her take some precautions when it came to drug use later in life.

Blended family and the bluest eye. Things changed significantly for Christina when her stepfather entered her life when she was around the age of eight or nine. For Christina, the ensuing blended family dynamics were confusing, challenging, and conflictual. Christina noted her White stepdad and his military-style approach to parenting often clashed with her Mexican cultural upbringing. She indicated, "Because he was raised by the military, that he was kind of like trying to shove that down my throat, you know? Well, I wasn't, you know my mom wasn't raised that way, my dad wasn't raised that way."

More challenging still was the judgment and scrutiny she experienced when around her new extended family members. She recalled feeling less than because of her

Mexican heritage: “His family, um, they looked down at us because we were Mexican.” Christina described having struggled with feelings of internalized oppression as a result: “When I was younger all I wanted to do was be White! I just wanted to be White so bad, you know? I mean I don’t feel that way now. And I haven’t for a very, very long time.” At the same time, while far more self-accepting now, Christina mused about the possible impact this had on dating history as she has dated White men exclusively. Despite these struggles and her sense of personal shortcoming on account of her subsequent alcoholism, Christina said she has always liked herself in a general sense: “I’ve always pretty much liked myself. And I mean, I mean I’m not a bad person. I’m a good person, you know? I’ve never really been a thief, or a big time liar.” Christina recalled a third grade teacher who was instrumental for buffering some of the prejudicial attitudes she was exposed to from her new family, especially with regard to cultural acceptance and receiving kindness: “She was one of my favorite teachers; actually, she was my favorite teacher. She was uh, an amazing woman! She taught us how to Mexican dance.”

The biggest shift of all, however, involved the growing distance in her relationship with her mother: “You’d think that I came from a really abusive family or something to be through all that, but, I wasn’t. Um, there was a point when I kind of felt like my mom chose my stepdad over me.” It was a dramatic change for Christina to go from feeling loved and her mom was “the best” to feeling as though her mother now sided with her stepdad over her. Through these various experiences and relational shifts, she began to become very self-reliant, less trusting, and developed a tendency to shut down at the first sign of conflict or judgment from others. She relayed she is still very sensitive to perceived slights, judgment, and being told what to do to this day: “I’ve been

the type of person that ... if I don't want to hear about it or I don't want to, uh, if I'm not just, I'll just walk away. And I won't turn around. And I won't contact you." In retrospect, Christina was able to acknowledge she had some positive feelings toward her stepfather and has come to realize he was probably doing the best he could in light of his upbringing and the circumstances. At the time, however, the cumulative nature of these shifting family dynamics proved too much for Christina to handle.

Life on the run and the street family. It was in this manner that Christina began running away from and intermittently returning to home throughout her adolescence. Recalling this time, she said, "I was really, really young, you know, and they declared me a juvenile delinquent because I just kept running away. And so I pretty much was on my own from like 13 to, 'til I was 18." She attributed this lifestyle of instability to her dislike for the shift in parenting dynamics: "I just couldn't handle the structure. I couldn't handle the rules. So I would leave, they'd piss me off, I'd leave, you know?" Worsening this pattern was Christina's sense of feeling unwanted and betrayed by her mother: "As I got older I began to resent him. And, because my mom backed up everything he said, I began to resent her too. And hence, that's when I started running away from home."

Christina relayed that at first her family would try to stop her or track her down when she ran away from home. She even recalled one instance when her parents used a cousin to track her down, having effectively "kidnapped" her off the streets. Narrating this event, she said her stepdad

grabs me, puts handcuffs on me, takes me to a camper truck, and there's my mom. And basically tells me, you can either get in or we throw you in. So they put me in the back of the truck. And then they smoked a joint with me. But um, they actually had me in an apartment that was dead-bolted from the outside, so I couldn't run away.... Basically, they just screwed themselves, because I just did

everything and earned their trust, and as soon as they, I did that and they took the lock off the door, I was gone.

Yet she felt it was her volatility and proneness to taking off at the slightest hint of conflict that eventually pushed her family away. Describing this tension, she recalled how “my family for many, many, many years, my father, my dad, um, would walk around on eggshells with me because they knew if they said something to upset me that I’d be gone.” Believing she had pushed them away more than the other way around, Christina expressed some remorse about this period of her life:

At some point I think they just kind of gave up. And were like, you know, “Obviously she’s not gonna stay with us.” Um, so, yeah. I’ve never been real, real close with my family. It’s kind of sad. Um, it’s just that, I think the only one that I really regret is my mom, for a long time. Kind of feel like I robbed her of, of her little girl. You know, because I was the only girl, and uh, and in the same breath, I kind of robbed myself, you know?

When on the run as a teenager, Christina would spend a lot of the time in a downtown, urban environment with her so-called “street family.” Reflecting back on these connections, Christina has come to view them as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, she felt valued by that group and even attributed her very survival to the protection they afforded her. She recalled how they “took me under their wing and always made sure I had a place to sleep, and food to eat, and so I had a street family basically. And my family just came second.” This environment of easy acceptance was a welcome contrast to her experiences at home: “I think my street family was more my family than my real family, you know? Because they didn’t judge me, and they didn’t walk on eggshells around me.” Yet on the other hand, Christina felt she experienced a loss of innocence at an early age due to her exposure to an older crowd, particularly the older men: “And probably in some ways it wasn’t good, you know? Because I’d been

hanging around with a pretty racy crowd at one point when I was young! I was hanging around people that are *way* older than me.” This community also served as a catalyst for her lasting substance use concerns: “You get enabled when you’re on the street. There’s always somebody who has some pot, or has some acid, or has some speed.... So it wasn’t always, they weren’t all positive things that they did for me.”

One bright spot during this time was Christina’s involvement with a wrap-around non-profit organization catered to meeting the needs of at-risk, runaway, and homeless youth. Describing this space, she recalled how “it was a safe haven, because they knew you were a runaway but they wouldn’t turn you in as long as you weren’t harming yourself or others.” Reflecting on how meaningful the positive support groups and prosocial adult contact had been, she hoped today’s youth truly appreciated what they were afforded: “I don’t know if they realize how lucky they are.”

Unresolved trauma and the splitting of ties. Amidst her experiences with homelessness as a youth, Christina found herself at age 17 headed to the West Coast with an older Vietnam veteran with whom she had been affiliated. Fortunately for her, when this relationship did not work out, Christina was able to get some family support to leave. So she wound up heading to the Pacific Northwest near where her mother and stepfather were staying at the time. Over the next few years, Christina worked hard and played hard, blending substance use with work responsibilities much like she had throughout her adult life. Living with a boyfriend at the time, Christina noted she had been pregnant at one point prior to having an abortion. More challenging still was the news she was about to receive.

Having recently passed up on the opportunity to spend the weekend with her mother, Christina was quite shocked when she first heard the news that her mother was on life support after having had an aneurism while visiting family in the Rocky Mountain region. Once the shock subsided, Christina relayed she was awash with strong feelings of guilt for having been away for so long, effectively robbing herself and her mother of a relationship over the years: “I mean, I just fell to pieces. I mean, I was supposed to go see her, I was, if I wouldn’t have been so stingy, and so into, selfish, into my life, I woulda seen her.” With the help of a supportive boss at the time, Christina attempted to make it there before her mother was taken off life support: “She paid for my ticket, she had one of the other employees drive me to Seattle so I could catch a plane, um, when I came back she let me live with her.”

Although she no longer blames some family members for her mother’s death, she still holds strong feelings of resentment toward her stepfather and that side of the family for how they handled her mother’s end-of-life decisions. With intense emotions throughout, she recounted how “they knew I was on my way! And they ... let them pull the plug before I even got here. You know? And I just hate him for that! I won’t ever get over that! I’ll never forgive him.” Not only did this experience cause Christina to separate herself from her family all the more, she also felt she began to fall apart thereafter. She lamented, “I should have been home with my mom, you know? Getting to know her and growing up with her, and I screwed that all up. And so now she’s gone and I can’t ever get that back.” Christina disclosed she wound up eventually going to counseling on account of getting “PTSD” from her loss and the whole string of events. However, Christina readily acknowledged she still has not fully processed this loss on an

emotional level, noting she believes it dramatically shifted the direction her life took: “If my mom was still alive my life would be different. I wouldn’t be here, I wouldn’t be homeless, I would’ve never been homeless, you know? Because I know my mom would never turn me away.”

Transformation of substance use and instability. Although Christina had been through some challenging experiences in her life, this was by far the most difficult point in her life:

I didn’t know how to deal with that, I’d never had anybody important in my life die. And for my mom to die, I didn’t know how to deal with that. So I pretty much just drank myself into an oblivion. I lost my job, I lost my boyfriend, I gained a ton of weight, I, you know? And because I never really dealt with it, it’s always been that way.

Looking for a change, Christina elected to move to the Rocky Mountain region. She said she was basically taken in by her now-deceased brother’s girlfriend where she “practically raised [her] niece.” This transition gave Christina a lot of responsibility and a sense of purpose throughout the better part of her 20s. These relationships were important to her as well: “She let me come live with her and took care of me like, she was like a second mom to me, but she didn’t want to be called that, so she just became my sister.”

Over time, Christina relayed her alcohol use became more than just about her unresolved grief, anger, and feelings of guilt surrounding the circumstances of her mother’s death. Increasingly, she found her alcohol use could be triggered or motivated by just about anything:

It’s not about, it’s not always about, um, because I’m down or because I’m depressed, or because, you know, I mean a lot, there’s just been, you know, it’s just because uh, there’s clouds in the sky, or because I had a good day, or um, or

because I'm pissed, or you know, it's not all, it's not just because of one thing. My drinking can be triggered by anything, you know?

As a result, Christina found herself withdrawing more and more from family through her late 20s and into her 30s. She said she grew weary of making mistakes, having her stepdad try to tell her what to do, and constantly feeling as though she was a disappointment. In particular, she felt bad for the ways her alcohol use, intermittent sobriety, and repeat relapses impacted her relationship with her brother. Processing the effect of this pattern, she said, "Sometimes people get tired of that, you know? Like somebody doing something to some, to them, and then keep saying I'm sorry.... And after a while, people just get tired of hearing that."

One mistake she still finds herself paying for was the felony charge she picked up from an encounter she had with the police while she was intoxicated. Although she does not particularly remember having assaulted one of the officers, she indicated she certainly was not proud of what transpired:

It ruined my life in lots of ways. Um, uh, that cop obviously didn't deserve that. If I, I know his name, if I ever, any time I see a cop I look at his badge and see what his name is, because if I ever run into him, I have to be like, "you know what, I'm really sorry."

Christina indicated the intersection of this felony charge, her alcohol use concerns, and her long-term instability had a major impact on her ability to obtain subsequent employment and housing. Although she has held many jobs, she relayed she has been adversely impacted by her poor work history: "My work history just sucks, you know? Because I just never really stood in one place for too long." It was evident Christina held a lot of shame about her struggles with alcoholism, for which she attributed a lot of the

blame for her homelessness: “I think that’s the only thing that I hate about myself is that I’m an alcoholic. That’s the only thing that I dislike about myself is drinking.”

As her pattern of use worsened, Christina eventually found herself living on the streets for the first time at the age of 37. Surviving life on the streets required a degree of hardiness; Christina noted that getting through the days, and particularly the nights, was a constant challenge. Christina felt the need to clarify what she felt were common misperceptions about her experiences including others’ beliefs that there are no women who live on the streets and there are sufficient resources available to unaccompanied women who are homeless. She particularly wanted to expand others’ awareness around what “flying sign” entails (i.e., holding up a sign in order to get donations) and the motivation behind it (see Figure 15). Christina said, “I wasn’t just flying to get alcohol, you know? There was a lot of things that I flew for”; however, she acknowledged alcohol was purchased to help cope with the harsh elements endured while sleeping outside.



Figure 15. Christina photo 1.

Christina was also keen to point out that asking others for money was an inherently difficult task: “It is a soul-sucking, pride swallowing thing.” Furthering her point, she said, “It’s not easy to go out there and do that.... A lot of people won’t do it because it’s so embarrassing.... It was a means to an end, basically, for me.” Effectively, Christina wanted to communicate that it takes money along the way to be able to position oneself to make money, an understanding she felt many in the community lacked:

People are like you know, “Get a job!” Or whatever, you know? Like, but, you know that’s very well for them to say that, but like, even though I was out there and did want a job, so, where do I go to take a shower every morning so I could go to work clean? You know? Where? You know? Um, just, you know, do you realize that I’m sleeping under a bridge, you know? Or when you tell me to get a job, you know, there’s a lot of factors, you know? I sure didn’t want to be out there on the corner flying a sign. Yeah, I’d rather be working, obviously.

Time for a change. Recognizing she was caught in a cyclical trap, Christina eventually came to realize a change was needed: “I mean we were using the being outside as an excuse, because, you know when you’re outside and you have to crawl underneath a bridge to go to sleep, it’s kind of hard to do that sober.” Although she had heard “horror stories” about the transitional homeless shelter from peers on the street, Christina became acutely aware that it would be a necessary step if she wanted to stand a chance at sobriety and turning her life around; she could not have been more glad about her decision: “Coming here was like a really big turning point for me the first time, you know?” Like any major shift, it took Christina some time to adjust to life at the transitional shelter and away from her lifestyle from her time on the street: “I grew to accept it because that’s where I had to be in order to stay sober, I had to ... stay away from those people, because they drank, that’s all they do.” In addition to meeting her

current boyfriend during her first time at the shelter, she shared she wound up liking it there and was “grateful for the opportunity, and great for the sobriety, and um, grateful that I had a roof over my head and people that wanted to help me because I was trying to help myself.”

Resourceful in her use of the shelter, Christina and her boyfriend utilized the program successfully, got a place of their own, and launched back out into the world. Christina’s relationship with her boyfriend has been beneficial for both of them in many ways: “We motivate each other, and we need, we need that. He needs, we balance each other out basically.” And yet while he provides her support and balance, helps her want to do better and not worry about little things, and gives her a sense of purpose moving forward, Christina shared their mutual substance-use related difficulties and tendency to isolate themselves from others has and could continue to put them both at risk. She indicated this is what happened after they left the shelter the first time--both relapsed and eventually found themselves on the street once more. Christina stressed, “If we’re gonna drink it’s not gonna work. So we can’t drink. That’s just the bottom line. If we start drinking again, it’s over. It might as well be over, because we’re just not good drunks.” Like she had done in a previous relationship, Christina indicated that if patterns did not change regarding the mutual substance use, she was willing to make the difficult decision to end the relationship altogether: “We need to get our lives together and we need to keep them together.”

Christina soon sought out the aid of the shelter for a second time--this time on her own for the time being. Apart from her boyfriend, Christina found herself somewhat challenged by this: “Some of our energy is going towards missing each other. And we

don't, right now we can't afford that. We need to be concentrating on what we're doing.” As much as she hated being apart from him, the distance has also been revelatory: “Like everything's just turned full circle and you know, and having to be apart like we are right now, just kind of brings things into perspective.” Since seeking out the help of the shelter again, Christina has intentionally tried to withdraw from the communities and relationships that were adverse influences for her alcohol abuse. In many ways, those communities and relationships reminded her of where she was before and served as motivation for her moving forward (see Figure 16). Yet she also acknowledged she was saddened to still see so many out there who are entrenched or forgotten:

There are people over there that do care and are doing stuff to get out of that position, but there's also very, very, very many of them that just are stuck. It saddens me that some of these people have just, either they fell through the cracks when they were younger, or they just don't care anymore, you know? But, at the same time, you know, you don't know anybody else's story. You can't pass judgment on somebody, you know?



Figure 16. Christina photo 2.

Never one to give up, Christina has tried to maintain a positive outlook moving forward: “I mean, here I am again, but that’s all right, you know? Just gotta get up and dust yourself off and try again!” She gave a lot of credit for her optimism to her own prior success as well as to the non-judgmental support she received from the shelter: “I made it before when I left here, I feel like I can do it again, you know? And that’s important, you know, that I, that they’re on my side and they’re not judging me, that’s important for me.” Christina was fairly emotional when she expressed just how appreciative she was to not have the disappointment she had in herself reflected in the treatment she received from the shelter staff: “I feel like I let somebody down, but they have, the staff hasn’t treated me like that.... They just know me, and they just, like, they’re behind me, you know?” Discussing the picture of the shelter she had taken in her photo-elicitation project, she explained,

I took a picture of the [shelter] because, um, because it just, you know it helped me in the past, and even though I’m back here again, um, I’m okay with that because um, for me it’s a, another chance, um, to maybe do stuff and uh, get to that point in my life where everything is going to be okay, you know? Like, um, like just that it’s okay that I’m here and I’m starting over, you know, I’m starting again.

While substance use might have helped numb some of her pain, Christina found that by being at the shelter and sober, she has discovered newfound motivation, a desire to live in a productive, fulfilled manner, and an awakened determination: “I want to live. I want to get married. And I want to, you know, have a life beyond drinking and being homeless.... I want to be productive, I want to just have a life.... I’m ready for that!” Indeed, Christina shared her motivation for change was at an all-time high: “I’m tired! I’m tired of having to start over. I’m tired um, not having my own place. I’m tired of not

having a steady job, and I'm just so frickin' tired of drinking. I just really, really, *really* need for this time to be it!"

For now Christina relayed she was feeling positive about her sobriety efforts: "If I stay away from the alcohol, I can do anything I want. And I truly believe that." Yet she also acknowledged she must remain focused on the present: "Right now, I mean being an alcoholic and being an addict, you just, you need to focus on what's right in front of you or else you can very easily fall off, fall off the wagon."

More or less estranged in recent years since her mother's death, she is now motivated and cautiously working toward reconnecting with some family members before it is too late. She is cautious partly because she does not want to be judged or viewed as a letdown again: "So, I guess even my real family relationships now, uh, I kind of hold back because I'd rather, I feel like I always disappoint them." Although she often tries to tell herself she is impervious to others' opinions of her, she admitted, "But I do care! You know? I do love my brother, I do love my dad, and I do want them to see that I'm doing good, or that I'm working on my life and stuff like that." So she is now really trying to maintain her abstinence and demonstrate she is truly trying to help herself: "When I'm helping myself my family wants to help me more. You know, because people help people that are helping themselves, you know?" Such an attitude has become a bit of a guiding philosophy for Christina as she continues to strive toward sustained sobriety and greater stability: "There's always that thing for me, and that is people help people that help themselves.... I mean for a lot of people out here, it's just a handout, you know? I'd rather have a hand up, not out."

Cancerman

Cancerman is a 49-year-old male Caucasian individual who, as the name would suggest, does not hold back from acknowledging his ongoing struggle with cancer nor can he. With a thin, wiry frame, he has the look of a hard-working man. With a mouth prosthetic that at times impeded communication as well as giving him an appearance that looks beyond his years, he has the look of a survivor. During my time collaborating with him, Cancerman was in the midst of his first episode of homelessness, having been at the shelter for one month due to, by and large, his cancer, insurance changes, and out-of-pocket medical expenses that have yet to be reimbursed. Cancerman was receiving disability for his income but he would certainly much rather be working and back on the open road as a driving truck was in his family and in his blood. While at one point I considered cutting ties with Cancerman after he had missed multiple appointments and I learned during a chance encounter at the DMV that he had had the digital camera (and other belongings) stolen from him, I was glad it ended up working out in the end. This hard-working family man with a 10th grade education was friendly, straight-to-the-point, and excited to participate.

Bluegrass and the loving, hard-working home. Growing up on a farm in the Appalachian region as part of a very family-oriented home, Cancerman felt, “I had a great childhood, I had great parents.” He had many siblings with whom he got along well enough; although they were not particularly positive or negative in terms of support, he believed his family life was fairly positive. He described his parents as “the best parents any kid could ever want.... Couldn’t ask for no better,” also noting “they never held me back, they always supported me in anything.” Indeed, Cancerman felt he was always

well taken care of as a child: “I had a whole lot. Whatever I wanted, I got it. I had a very good childhood, I got along great with my parents.”

He was especially appreciative of the morals and values instilled in him such as to never abuse a woman or child: “I see a woman or child getting abused, I make it my business.” Apparently Cancerman took these values quite seriously, noting as an adult he once shot his own brother in the foot for having perpetrated domestic violence against his sister-in-law. He appeared proud of this intervention, namely because it proved effective. Cancerman also developed a sense of discipline and a hard work ethic from his father “because my father always taught us to work.” He said he would carry this way of being with him throughout his life, presently drawing inspiration from such values. As he recalled, “I was raised a lot different than the kids nowadays. Nowadays kids ain’t taught respect.”

Beyond his home, Cancerman was never too involved with the community. While he did express that the schools were good and his home community in the Appalachian region was a positive one, he relayed he had always just been more independent and family-oriented. While he had had some ups and downs in ties with his siblings over the years, he always remained close with his parents until they passed away. He shared with a note of satisfaction how he “called them at least four times a week.” The topic of his parents’ death appeared to be a difficult one for him, which he largely avoided during the interview.

Learning to drive truck and the open road. Cancerman had been a long-time truck driver, relaying both plainly and with a note of pride that “my occupation was a truck driver, driving trucks, 18-wheelers.” His father had been a truck driver and his

exposure to this occupation began at an early age: “My dad started teaching me how to drive a truck when I was 14 years old.” Cancerman seemed pleased with the fact that his dad thought he was unique from his brothers, electing to show him the ins and outs of truck driving in particular “because he thought out of, out of four boys, he thought I was the only one that was confident being a truck driver.... Which I was.” This bond with his father came at a price for Cancerman’s academic pursuits. Given the poor alignment between his father’s work schedule and his own school schedule, he recalled, “I’d go be with him at night, and he’d drop me off at school, and uh, I was with him on the road at night, I was sleeping in school during the day.” Eventually it came to a point where he had to decide between continuing with school and dropping out so he could spend time with his father. And so it was that Cancerman elected to drop out of school in the 10th grade. In many ways, he found this to be an easy decision as it “made a lot of good sense, a lot of sense in my eyes. Because I already knew how to drive a truck, I knew how to farm; that’s all you need to know.” He furthered this thought by expressing his belief that “now, a high school diploma, it’s pretty much ain’t worth the paper it’s printed on.”

Out of high school, Cancerman was able to spend time with his father and take the necessary steps to qualify himself for a truck-driving occupation. It was around this time that Cancerman entered into one of his longest lasting and, for him, his most meaningful dating relationship. He was in this relationship for a seven-year period and reflected on how this relationship compared to others he had been in, even ones in which he had fathered a child, had not matched up. As he said, “Pretty much the rest of them, they haven’t meant anything.” However, when Cancerman had been involved in romantic

involvements over the years, he tended to invest himself as he would rather not be elsewhere:

I was never one to get out and hang out. I pretty much am just a home person.... To me, I'd rather go out or just sit at home and watch TV with whoever I'm in a relationship with. Or, if it's a place where I can't take a woman, then I don't need to go myself.

Once qualified and employed, Cancerman embarked on what was a 20-year career driving semi-trucks. In his mid-20s, a job lead lured him out to the West Coast, leaving Appalachia, his family, and his girlfriend behind. As he loved driving truck and traveling the open road often for five to six months at a time, this was an offer he had to pursue. Cancerman was certainly grateful and appreciative of his father and what his mentoring into the field had done for his life. He captured this sentiment in his photo-elicitation project (see Figure 17) as seeing semi-trucks of this particular model reminded him of his father, which he found encouraging and inspired him to move forward.



Figure 17. Cancerman photo 1.

Although he did not speak about this part of his life until the member-check process, Cancerman revealed he had a bit of a wild streak during his 20s, which led to going to jail on a handful of occasions. He recalled how he would routinely drink fairly heavily, would often instigate run-ins with the police by speeding, and frequently bucked authority with his purported big mouth. Although he seemed to have turned away from such choices, Cancerman seemed to maintain his flair for challenging authority and speaking his mind when he felt it was appropriate.

Cancer, the medical community, and the faith of a four-year-old. While out on the West Coast, Cancerman eventually got into what would be a 10-year relationship with the mother of his son. Although this partnership was rocky at times, they managed to move out to the Rocky Mountain region together when Cancerman was in his early 40s. It was at this point that Cancerman's life began to shift fairly dramatically. Having gone undetected when he had been living out on the West Coast, shortly upon arriving here, it was revealed he had cancer. He had smoked cigarettes for years, of which he is still trying to quit to this day. Cancerman expressed some frustration toward his doctors on the West Coast, noting there was a part of him that still felt he should sue for their oversight. Regardless, it quickly became apparent that in light of the type and stage of his cancer, they would need to move to surgery quickly.

Cancerman indicated the level of competency with his medical care varied widely by the community in which he has been able to seek treatment. He was particularly critical of the medical care he received in the city where he was initially located in the Rocky Mountain region; which happened to be the same city in which he is currently residing. He recalled, "Well I have had bad experiences a lot with doctors here;

hospitals, emergency rooms, the clinics.” Although he acknowledged having two good doctors among his entire treatment team, he and his eventual surgeon felt the overall delivery of treatment was marred with incompetence: “Even my doctor, my surgeon said, “I don’t know where they got their medical license, but they sure as hell didn’t go to school to get them.”” The questioning of credibility stemmed in large part from the fact that Cancerman flat-lined multiple times while in surgery, ultimately requiring rapid transport to another city’s hospital. Cancerman said his son was just four-years-old at the time he went into surgery for the first time. He said it was his son who helped give him the strength to survive his surgeries when all others thought he would not make it:

Everybody thought I wasn’t, my doctors, everybody, they just totally convinced I was not going to survive.... And both times they killed me.... I flat-lined eight times.... I flat-lined seven in XX. And the boy kept me alive. That little boy gave me a puppy, at the time he was four years old.... And he said, his exact words, “Daddy, these people are crazy. So mamma, the doctors, everybody’s crazy.” He said, “You’re not gonna die”.... And that was his favorite stuffed animal. He gave it to me. He said, “You’re gonna keep puppy with you during the surgery.” He said, “Puppy gonna make sure that you live. That you come back to me”.... And I firmly believe that that four-year-old child’s faith, and that little puppy, is the only reason I’m alive today.

As I had the opportunity to see it during our interview process, Cancerman still has this puppy stuffed animal, which he keeps with him all the time. The support of his son and his polarizing experiences with the medical community during his battle with cancer have all been highly impactful for him. Cancerman took a picture of the building where his care had been the worst (see Figure 18), relaying how “I took that one there because I remember the exact hall and room and I was at when I was in the hospital there.”



Figure 18. Cancerman photo 2.

The tangible reminder of his son that the puppy stuffed animal provided appeared to have been equally, if not more, important to him to this day. After his surgeries, his relationship with the mother of his child grew increasingly conflictual, describing their dynamic as “it’s just as long as we don’t talk, we get along good. If we decide to talk, then it don’t go so well.” Although he was not particularly open to discussing how he was impacted by the subsequently estranged relationship with his son, it appeared to be a sensitive topic for him: “Now I don’t remember, because some things I try to just erase from my memory.... And after surgery too, some things, I don’t, I can’t remember.... Right, because if I start thinking about things, I get really depressed.” He did give another glimpse into how he felt by recalling, “A month ago, his mother...said to me, ‘You still got that puppy I gave you?’ I’m like, ‘Yeah I still got it.’ She’s like, ‘I want it back.’ I’m like, ‘Try taking it. It’s not gonna happen.’”

Cancerman has now been in the Rocky Mountain region for about eight years since his diagnosis of cancer and subsequent treatment. In love with the land, he now

views it as his home. He shared how this feeling influenced his decision to not return home to the Appalachian region at the behest of his siblings: “Because after my surgery and stuff, they wanted me to go back home. But I said, it don’t matter where I was born, XX will always be home.” Cancerman shared his resistance to return to be closer to his siblings has ultimately strained their relationships in recent years.

Because of his cancer treatment, Cancerman has been on disability although he would much rather be working. He relayed it was on account of his cancer, his medications, and a switch in his insurance plan he believed had not been communicated to him fully that he now finds himself homeless. Describing what happened, he shared,

They switched my insurance coverage and didn’t tell me.... So I went two months with no insurance.... With no insurance. I had to pay medication out of my pocket. And it’s taking forever to reimburse me for it.... So I used my rent money to pay for medication.... And I was waiting for a reimbursement check.... And that’s why I’m here.

While Cancerman trusts his experience of homelessness will be short-term in nature and he will get back up on his feet again soon, he is presently awaiting a third, and hopefully final, surgery for his cancer. He plans to use the shelter to wait for his refund to come in, continue to engage in physical rehabilitation, and eventually get back to work. As he put it, “I don’t let nothing stand in my way.”

Rehab, homelessness, and moving on. Cancerman was generally positive regarding his experiences with the shelter. Describing the staff, he relayed, “They’re nice in here, and they uh, like if I can’t eat something they pretty much accommodate me, because I can’t eat just anything.” He also discussed how other residents at the shelter have been willing to lend him a hand as needed: “If I’m not feeling well and need to sit down at dinner, they’ll bring my tray to me, or whatever.” The interaction with positive

staff and caring peers helped him cope with his waylaid desire to again be self-sufficient: “I’d love to have my own place, but I just have to deal with it, you know?”

Describing himself as a “fighter” with a strong sense of self-efficacy as a “doer,” it came as no surprise that Cancerman relayed that “it’s just how I got, uh, it’s the same thing I’ve done pretty much my whole life. I mean, I’m a fighter. I won’t give up.... A lot of people just, they just give up. I don’t.” His approach to work and challenges in his life have helped him derive a positive sense of self-worth over the years: “I felt great about myself.... Always been a doer.... Not one to just sit around and do nothing. I pretty much accomplished what I want to accomplish. I set my sights on something, I can do it.” Although Cancerman does not like being idle, he is planning to wait until after his reimbursement, surgery, and subsequent recovery to move on. He stressed, “As soon as I get that check I’m planning on getting out of here and getting my own place again.”

In the meantime, Cancerman is working on his physical rehabilitation, is involved in a four-year romantic relationship, is considering going back to work, and just recently became a father again. With access to a nearby park and baseball field as well as the support of his partner, Cancerman has been slowly working to improve his physical health. He shared how the “main thing is she’s teaching me how to walk, because I, she’s helped me out like jogging up and down the sidewalk.” While he has experienced some conflict in this on-again, off-again relationship since she is much younger than he and her mother does not approve of their involvement with one another, the birth of their daughter two weeks prior has given him newfound resolve moving forward: “This point I can’t see no difficulty, but uh, my goal is to ... get my own place, move in with her, have

her and the baby move in with me, go back on the road driving a truck.” He said his girlfriend encourages him to work and to be around family, though not necessarily as a semi driver. He expressed, “I think that she doesn’t want me on the road all the time.... When I drive truck, I’m on the road, I stay on the road five, six months and never come home.” Yet work and life on the road seemed to be what Cancerman knew best and what he hungers for now. He shared, “Well, it just, when I see a truck, I just can’t wait to get back out there, back on the road.... For me it’s like a paid vacation.” Indeed, being a truck driver is in his blood; he even shared that he would like to teach his newborn daughter how to drive someday “because my son and that baby give me encouragement to keep fighting.” Cancerman captured this sentiment, his work ethic, and the hope he has for himself moving forward by taking a picture of the type of semi-truck rig he used to operate (see Figure 19). As he put it, “I got pictures of trucks because uh, the, it’s kind of encouragement to get back on the road after all of my physical therapy.... It gives me enthusiasm.”



Figure 19. Cancerman photo 3.

Black

Black is a 31-year-old, “Hispanic,” married father who just received his GED one year ago, having previously dropped out of high school. When I first began interacting with Black, I found him to be friendly and agreeable. Black was working full-time as a line cook, noting he and his wife had an apartment lined up and were set to be leaving the shelter within the week. Thus, he was eager to expedite the interview process and willing to do what it took to ensure he could follow through. He appeared forthcoming regarding the content of his life story but Black acknowledged he struggled with holding back emotionally. During my time speaking with him, Black was in the midst of his third episode of homelessness and had been presently homeless for four months following the loss of his Section 8 housing due to alcohol relapse-related difficulties. Having been homeless for around one year of his life altogether, Black said all prior homelessness episodes related to choices he and his wife made with alcohol abuse. While never in prison, he indicated he had been in various county jails throughout his life.

Black took accountability for his prior transgressions, noting he finally felt he was at a place where he more fully appreciated the need for a change in his life. Although longer-term goals such as education, developing a career, and regaining full custody of his six-year-old daughter helped motivate him, Black recognized the importance of acting upon what was presently in his control and was working toward greater stability one step at a time. When we eventually followed up for the member-check process, Black was pleased to report that although he was now a part of a work release program following a probation violation, he was working more than fulltime, still visited his daughter, and said he and his wife had maintained their lease at the same apartment the whole time.

Poverty and the absence of a father. Born and raised in the Rocky Mountain region, Black described himself as having grown up “with my mom and my sister. Never knew my dad. That’s one thing. Just, I don’t know, it’s kind of hard to, I don’t know what to talk about.” Any time the topic of Black’s father came up in conversation, there was a noticeable shift in tone. For instance, he recalled a memory around how he was supposed to have seen his father at a child support hearing, noting, “That was the first time I was ever gonna see him, and he didn’t show up.... I know that probably has a lot to do with why I, I don’t know, some of the deep-down stuff I deal with.” Matters related to the absence and perceived rejection from his father have resonated deeply for Black throughout his life, causing a difficult-to-name hurt he has often tried to heal indirectly: “Felt I had to do to fill something that I was missing, I don’t know. It’s like I said, it’s always been one thing, if it wasn’t the weed I was always had to be doing something, or even if it’s not something substance-wise, just, habit and stuff I guess.” With his father neither around nor helping with child support, Black came to believe he had to be “tough” while growing up, often telling himself statements such as “Oh, I don’t need him.”

With his father absent, Black came to appreciate a lot about his relationship with his mother and how she helped keep the family going over the years. Black recalled how, despite contending with the difficulties of raising children while impoverished, his mother always did something to make sure they had somewhere to live: “Yeah, and I remember growing up on Section-8 and welfare and stuff like that too. And actually being in a shelter with, a couple times, with my mom and my sister.” Indeed, Black continually had to adjust to new living environments as their economic circumstances

regularly caused them to have to relocate: “We used to move like every year it seemed like when I was growing up.” In a lot of ways, Black felt his mother was there for him notwithstanding some of the “bad choices” she would make. As he recalled,

Me and my mom were close. It wasn’t bad. I felt like I could do whatever I wanted kind of with my mom. I was the first-born so she always treated me like, still calls me her sunshine, but I can still get away with whatever I want. So it wasn’t like, I feel like I wasn’t really disciplined very much.

In addition to many of her positive efforts, such as her attempts to get him interested in Sunday school, Black acknowledged he had more nuanced and conflicted feelings toward his mother as well. Although he valued having autonomy, there was a part of him that found her permissiveness to be neglectful. This was partly due to the oftentimes dangerous nature of their surrounding environment. While never affiliated himself, Black recalled how his childhood neighborhoods were marked by gang activity: “I remember being seven-years-old and getting jumped out in my backyard just playing with my toys.” Yet Black also held feelings of resentment and bitterness regarding his mother that he slowly became more in touch with over time:

A lot of stuff has changed that I hold against her too, because she used to do, she used to drink and leave. And now I’ve, that I’m older I mean, I don’t know I think about it like, it pisses me off, I want to tell her sometimes how bad I’ll tell her. So it’s changed, I’ve kind of distanced myself from her.

Black reported having similarly mixed feelings regarding the two live-in boyfriends his mother had while he was growing up. When he was about seven- or eight-years-old, his mother’s first main boyfriend moved in and stayed with them for the next five years, whereas the second lived with them from ages 14 to 18. Black recollected how he “had nothing against them, I mean they never did me nothing wrong. I mean the first one, I

used to see them fight and stuff, that's why she finally left them, because he, they would get into physical confrontations."

Whether it was his mother, her boyfriends, or many of the members of his extended family, Black's narrative was layered with complex relationships wherein supportive aspects of relationships were matched by conversely damaging features. Some of the early exceptions to this norm for Black included his relationship with his sister and with his Big Brother from the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program. Black shared he was always close with his sister while growing up and still is despite the occasional conflict that surfaces these days regarding decisions about his own daughter. He said,

We've always been real close, I've always been like kind of her protector and looked out for her, I feel. Honestly, she feels the same way. Um, it got rocky a couple times since she's had our daughter, because of, just decisions, it's hard to have your little sister tell you what you can and can't do with your own kid. But then I have to, you know, and I get all hotheaded right away sometimes.... Then I have to step back and realize.

In this relationship, Black is working to take greater accountability with some of his shortcomings and struggles as he indicated he does not want to withdraw from those whom he has decided to let in. Black felt he made that mistake within his relationship with his Big Brother over time even though they had a really positive connection over the five to six year period it lasted. Not only was this a positive support and a person who valued him, for Black "it meant a lot to know that even someone out there, like a stranger, could just come and do stuff like that for me." Even though his childhood was marked by instability and at times polarizing relationships, Black managed to maintain a relatively positive sense of self: "I felt good about myself. Like I never really cared about what people thought. I mean, I'm sure I probably did things to seek approval, but...I feel like I had good self-esteem, and I was, did my own thing."

Moving, skateboarding, and drifting. Although at times dangerous, unstable, and unpredictable, there were many aspects of the urban environment he grew up in that he missed when his family moved to a new town when his mother was able to leave her abusive relationship; Black was 12 at the time. The prior environments had at least been familiar to him and he felt he learned his “street smarts” from having grown up there: “I didn’t like it at first, but it was like, but I was kind of used to changing schools every year anyway.” Suddenly finding himself more of a minority, Black managed to find a way to adapt and appreciated the seemingly friendlier, safer aspects of his new community: “It was different, I grew up, when I was in elementary schools, I grew up around a bunch of little ‘esé thug kids,’ wanted to fight all the time.... It was just different! Everybody over there was more friendly.”

Black’s move to a new community helped in various ways, yet it also led to him becoming connected with peers who engaged in both skateboarding and substance abuse. Several facets of Black’s skateboarding involvement that started at age 12 and lasted for the next 13 years he believed were positive for him. For starters, he was quite talented at it. Black not only developed positive self-worth, greater determination, and focus from his skateboarding involvement, he also garnered a lot of positive support from others as well as sponsorships in the community. His friends were helpful in promoting him as a skateboarder; unfortunately, they were also helpful in furthering his substance use concerns: “They would help me too, we’d film together and get videos out there to find people who would sponsor us and stuff like that.... But at the same time we’d go out after and then get all twisted.” Beyond the obvious drawbacks, Black also regretted his increased involvement with substance abusing peers, which led to him to withdraw more

and more from his Big Brother over time. Additionally, despite the supportive presence his mother offered during his competitions, Black's relationship with his mother became increasingly troubled from this point forward:

I did a few contests, quite a few contests and she was always there. So she always supported what I wanted to do.... Stuff that held me back was probably just her, like not disciplining me and that, like, you know, I could take off downtown all day and she wouldn't know where I was. And then again with the weed thing, that's where I started, is I always knew where the weed was, it was right under her bed.... So that was another thing, she gave up on trying to tell me no.

Whatever appreciation Black had for himself and his talents eventually gave way as his substance use increased and his "addictive personality" took over. Black found himself getting into trouble on a routine basis at school, meanwhile smoking and drinking sometimes with his mother and her second live-in boyfriend at home. Prior to this point, Black noted he had generally felt optimistic about life, had good self-esteem, and a great sense of humor. But with his substance use, Black felt he needed to be "filling something that [he] was missing." Not finding himself able to do so while also having substance abuse modeled and enabled by both family and friends, Black transitioned to harder drugs quickly. Recalling this period, he shared,

I've been I think an addict since I was young, since I started smoking weed when I was like 12.... Moved onto drinking every now and then and doing like acid, and that's why I actually got kicked out of school, because I got caught with some dose at school. And, I got expelled that year and then I was old enough the next year to decide that I didn't want to go back.

Thus, Black found himself no longer attending school after the ninth grade. He relayed that his mom did not put up much of an argument when Black decided to stop going to school altogether. Although difficult to say what impact this decision might have had on Black's life direction, it certainly did not help. Black elected to move out of

the home at the age of 17, noting he found his mother to be increasingly emotional and difficult to relate to.

A period of heavy use. As a young adult without a high school education who was engaging in heavy substance use and regularly skateboarding downtown, Black found himself heading to jail for the first time at the age of 18. Black was no stranger to the police, having picked up various charges as a juvenile, though he never spent time in a detention center or prison. Out on his own and with limited financial means beyond the minimum wage jobs he could acquire, Black was grateful he had a close and connected extended family who was there to support him through thick and thin. Similarly as with his mother, Black's extended family members were unwavering in their care and support while having double-edged qualities regarding their permissiveness and substance use concerns.

Following this first release from jail, Black went to live with one of his uncles for a while. In describing him, Black stated, "He was like another mentor I had, kinda, probably not in a good way.... That's kind of why I started doing coke and stuff like that. Drinking a lot of beer every day.... But still, it's what I learned." An even heavier period of substance use then started for Black. He shared that he began using meth at this point in time, which continued for about a four-year period. Black even recalled how while indirectly related to his substance abuse, he and some family members had been robbed at gunpoint in their home. Under the influence at the time, Black still found this to be a troubling and traumatizing experience.

While Black recognized the negative aspects of many of his family relationships in retrospect, this was his norm and they were people who showed care for him in their

own right. Black shared most of his extended family had continued to convey messages that were non-shaming, such that he knew they believed in him, would never turn their back on him, and would still make him feel welcome to this day. He said confidently,

No matter what I do, they would never turn away from me. Like they know what I'm doing, drinking or like, no matter what I do they would always be there. If I was to, I would never do that, but if I was to hurt somebody or you know, do something terrible, they would still be there, they wouldn't just turn their nose away.... Or even now with my drinking and stuff, and being homeless, like they don't make me feel ashamed or they don't want me around.

At the same time, there was a difference between knowing support was available and actually making constructive use out of it. Highlighting this distinction, Black noted, "Sometimes I'm too ashamed to try to call some of them, I know I can." Whether coincidental or not, Black noted he switched over to alcohol shortly after being held at gunpoint: "I started drinking heavily when I was like 23. I stopped doing other drugs and just started, just strictly drinking cheap vodka." The next few years were marked by long stretches of what Black called functional alcoholism: "I want to say I was a functioning alcoholic, because I would work every day, still drink every day, but I would still go to work." As Black's alcohol use worsened, he increasingly withdrew from activities and relationships that built him up. With skateboarding, he shared about how he "was pretty well known out there, just from going to different places and filming and stuff like that, but it kind of fell off as I got older. Started drinking a lot, and kind of got out of that." With less positive sources of self-worth in his life, his sense of personal shame began to grow. In many ways, Black's sense of shame prevented him from reaching out to others for support: "I just do, make dumb choices so I feel, of course less, less about myself.... That part of myself has changed when looking at myself, but I'm trying to change that too by just slowly getting things back together." To date, his efforts to regain his

optimism, confidence, and positive regard for himself have been inconsistent, yet he has been trying to focus more on the small steps he has made toward health.

Starting a family. In the midst of his transition to heavy alcohol use, Black met and began to date the woman who would eventually become his wife. Together for the past eight years and married for the last two, Black and his wife have been through a lot together over the years. Much like with members of his extended family, Black appreciated the loyalty and non-judgmental manner with which his wife treated him. As he recalled fondly, “I think any other girl would have been like ‘this guy’s a bum, this guy’s a loser you know, I’m outta here.’ But she’s always stuck by my side no matter what.” Not surprisingly, Black took a picture of his and his wife’s rings (see Figure 20) in his photo-elicitation project to capture this important member of his community:

That just reminds me that she’s always there for me, I took a picture of that. Because I, you know, so that’s someone that will always be a part of my life, you know, you never know what’ll happen in the future, we may not be together forever, but we’ll always have that love, no matter what. That’s what I feel anyway. No matter what happens, we will always have, deep-down, have some love for each other.

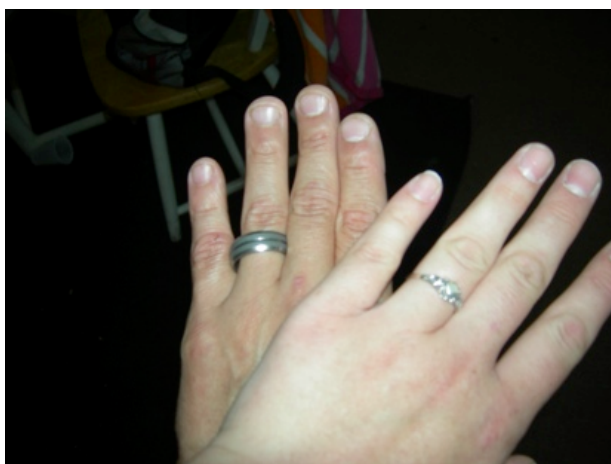


Figure 20. Black photo 1.

Unfortunately, not unlike his relationships with many family members, Black's marriage has both positive and negative features wherein they built each other up or brought each other down. As he described, he and his wife are both "addicts" and struggle with enabling one another, though not always at the same time. Black relayed that shortly after their daughter was born when he was around 26- or 27-years-old, he wound up having sole custody of her until she was two-years-old while his partner dealt with some of her addiction concerns. It was also around this time that Black heard his father had passed away. Black said this news affected him deeply as this made the fact definite that he would never meet nor come to know his father:

I think finding out my dad was, when I found out my dad died I know that kind of messed with me.... Because I guess there was always this part of me that thought, you know I'll meet him one day.... And I think that time too I started drinking really heavily and I didn't even really think about it when I found out about my dad or whatever. But I know deep down inside that it had to have bothered me.

Black did not only turn to substance use to cope with his "deep down" emotions, he tried turning to friends but found they largely did not understand the heart of his conflict. Black recalled how he had "even some people telling me, 'You're probably better off, my dad's an asshole.' Well still, you still want to know, a-heh, you know?" Despite some of her vices, Black's partner was effective at encouraging him to talk about and process some of the feelings he had tried to repress.

Back together with his partner, it quickly became evident they continued to be a bad influence on one another's substance use. When he was 29, custody of their daughter was given to Black's sister. Because of this change in custody, Black and his partner moved to their present community about four years ago to be able to visit their daughter while trying to get the support they needed: "Things just weren't going well, so we ended

up, my sister ended up getting custody, and she lives out here so we stay out here so we can see her.” Black acknowledged his daughter was a strong source of motivation for him to work on his substance use concerns and get his affairs in order:

No matter bad, no matter how bad I love my daughter, or, you know, care for her I have to really want it for myself. And I just wasn’t ready.... You know, so all the treatment in the world wasn’t going to make me or my wife better if we didn’t want to quit.

Sometimes the easy way is the hard way. Living in a new community to be closer to their daughter, Black and his wife got married when he was 30-years-old. Separated from his friends and former community, Black said it took him some time to adjust to his new roles and types of connections. While having a diminished connection to some of his friends was not entirely a bad thing in light of their lifestyle choices, Black and his wife isolating themselves was not necessarily any better.

Black shared that for each of the past three winters, he and his wife had instances of episodic homelessness that lasted for about four months each time. He indicated each episode had revolved around alcohol use relapses with his wife, quitting jobs, disengaging from responsibilities, falling behind on payments, and ultimately winding up homeless. Section-8 benefits, unemployment, and a sympathetic landlord had at times delayed the inevitable but Black said their drinking eventually caught up with them. Just prior to an earlier episode of homelessness, Black noted his place of work had closed unexpectedly, which prompted him to start collecting unemployment and drinking heavily:

Yeah, it made it, I didn’t have to go to work, you know? I just sat around and I drank all day. I had the money, I would call my unemployment thing every week, and you know, pretend I was looking for a job and I would get the money on my card. And that lasted for a while.

In describing his experience of homelessness, he shared, “It sucks! Hahaha. It’s terrible, it’s depressing.” Ever critical of himself, he relayed that with their financial circumstances, “Sometimes it does feel shameful to like, you know, especially if I’m already old enough to know better. How can you not afford toilet paper at my age?” Over the past number of years, in-between and amongst these episodes of homelessness, Black said he always managed to acquire some sort of work in kitchens as a line cook. Black figured he had probably worked 15 to 18 different jobs within the past few years alone. In describing this, he shared, “I kinda always go back to it because it’s, I can find a job easy in the kitchen just because of my experience.... It’s not hard to talk my way into a kitchen.” Most often, however, Black would only manage to stay employed at a given location temporarily. Explaining this pattern, he expressed,

It always goes back to my drinking.... We were on Section-8.... Which pays rent and all that. So I didn’t have to work, you know, they paid rent. So we just got used to donating plasma. I was doing stupid stuff to get money for booze.... And it just got to the point where I ended up getting a charge, a domestic violent charge.

Because of incidents like this and other minor criminal behavior, Black found himself in jail at various points as well as involved with Social Services and various counseling services. His reviews on such services were mixed: “This is like the third time I’ve been in IOP too, and I’ve been in other treatment programs. And as soon as I’m done with them and I’m on my own, I go back to what I’m doing slowly.” A common thread in more recent years for Black was the need for relapse prevention support and the lack thereof. This was certainly true for Black, especially given the availability and accessibility of liquor stores and other potential relapse triggers (see Figure 21):

Even just the liquor store, seeing it sometimes because it’s so tempting, you know? I could probably go in there, get those guys to cuff me a bottle. Like, you

know, “Hey I ain’t got no money right now, but I’ll come back tomorrow and pay.” And they would. They used to do it before like all the time, just because they know I was always in there. So that’s rough that I deal with that every day.



Figure 21. Black photo 2.

As Black’s present community was filled with liquor stores, he saw the one depicted above every day and he experienced unnecessary temptation from cashing his checks there. He noted this liquor store “has a lot to do with why I’m in this situation, just because I always end up there.” There was a part of Black that knew he should not go near this or other liquor stores and yet he still found himself there on a regular basis. In this regard, Black was sure to emphasize his sense of personal accountability for his choices: “It’s not really the community’s fault that, you know, there’s a liquor store all over, but it’s my choice to go to that liquor store.”

Amidst the periods of sobriety while homeless, gradual relapses, and times of heavy alcohol use, Black’s health began to take a toll. After experiencing rapid weight changes and finding himself thirsty all the time, Black elected to seek out medical attention through the community health bus: “They told me if I didn’t quit drinking, I was

borderline, and if I kept doing what I was doing I'd be diabetic within a year, and I didn't listen." Unfortunately, he did not abide by their advice and developed Type-II diabetes just over a year later.

With the hopes of eventually achieving more permanent sobriety and one day transitioning from visits back to full-time custody, Black's daughter served as a source of motivation for him and his wife. That was partly why he had been experiencing a lot of guilt and self-blame around his substance use of late as his daughter "means the world to me! That's why I think I beat myself up sometimes so far to where I keep going because I think about her and I don't want her to lose her dad because it could happen." While Black seemed to try to use self-criticism and goals related to getting his daughter back to urge himself forward, he was also pragmatic in recognizing the need to focus on short-term goals related to stability: "And sometime I would like to try to get her back. But that's gonna take a lot, a lot of work, you know? So, that's another thing that's like, it's time to get it together already."

Bouncing back and the need for accountability. Earning his GED during the past year was one way in which Black was taking short-term considerations in mind with an eye toward longer-term change: "Well I took the pre-test and then I had to study math for like a week, and then in just took the test and I passed." Black was proud of this accomplishment, having not attended school since the ninth grade, and passed the first time. Black noted he was considering continuing with school as an option at some point, namely because he saw limited career prospects in line cook jobs he had grown accustomed to acquiring. For right now, Black's focus was on the need to transition back into independent living and maintaining accountability.

Having made repeated mistakes, run into trouble with the law, and run afoul of some of the other nearby shelter options, Black and his wife felt they had hit bottom and were running out of options; at least out of options that would allow them to be able to stay in contact with their daughter. Illustrating this, Black shared how they recently

took a weekend pass and made the decision to go get a hotel room, and we drank. And that just ruined, just like that. We spent all the money we had, I lost my job for not going in, she lost her job, came back here, we were kicked out.... And would just, that made me realize I'm out of options, I can't keep doing this. I mean, how stupid, like over one weekend.

The delicacy of his situation and the immediacy of the consequences left Black clamoring to learn from his mistakes. Black viewed addiction as the biggest hindrance to their future success, expressing that past behavior had demonstrated he was most at risk for a relapse when he became comfortable and complacent with his situation. Although there were steep consequences, while at the shelter Black had come to appreciate the monitored sobriety he was provided: "If I went out and did something else ... and come back here they're not going to let me in and then I will be back out on the streets. So that definitely helped to keep me in line." Since Black and his wife were to be leaving the shelter shortly, he was worried about what would happen when such external sources of accountability were gone: "And I think that keeps me in line too, to where I have someone holding me accountable.... Because me and my wife don't hold each other accountable when it comes to being responsible." Knowing they had been negative influences on one another in the past, Black had been working hard to ensure he and his wife committed to proactively helping each other stay accountable moving forward:

But I told her, "It's not gonna be like that this time. You're gonna have to, you're gonna have to wait, or just, or not, we're not gonna, I don't wanna do it no more." She's said she's agreed with it, she's cool with it for now, but we'll just have to see how that pans out. Because she's just like me, if I'm not being held

accountable, you know, of course I'm gonna probably slip something here and there.

This attitudinal shift was partially helped by Black's time at the transitional shelter. For Black, homelessness was experienced as "depressing" but the staff and resources at the shelter helped him reduce his level of shame and allowed him to improve his self-efficacy: "I like this place a lot. They helped me out and made me feel better about being homeless, about, you know, you can pick yourself back up. You can, you can do it, do it right." Having taken a photograph of the shelter in his photo-elicitation project, Black was certainly appreciative of what he was afforded by the shelter. He went on to say,

We've been here a couple times, they've always helped us out. Sometimes they can be strict, but it's for our own good.... Even though sometimes it didn't feel like home, they still gave me somewhere to stay, and they gave me the opportunity to save money and get back on my feet.... Without judgment as well, I felt like I was never judged here.... Which is a good thing, you know?

At the same time, Black noted the shelter and the surrounding community had not entirely felt like home. In some ways, he felt this was not such a bad thing as it made him not want to stay at the shelter or find himself hanging around the same locales forever. Black said he had grown weary of seeing the same, systems-affiliated people, not only because he found some of them to be more negative and at times aggressive but also because they served as a mirror of himself. He acknowledged how "they probably feel the same way about me.... I'm in the same boat, I'm in trouble, I'm homeless. I'm at the library just about every day. So maybe that's why I, I get sick of it." All in all, Black found himself motivated for a change.

In addition to the support he received from working through the programs housed within the transitional homeless shelter, Black shared he had been feeling better now that

various aspects of his life were starting to fall into place. The fact he has a job, had an apartment lined up, was addressing his probation and treatment requirements, as well as been encouraging his wife to join him in turning over a new leaf all contributed to his sense of bouncing back one step at a time: “Yeah, taking pride in working and then, you know, stuff like that. And having even those, just a one little, one-bedroom small apartment, you know, take pride in that, that we did it ourselves, I mean.” This time around, Black was viewing work not as a source of income but also as a reminder of opportunities available to him, a means of staying accountable and sober, as well as a place to reciprocate the trust others placed in him through his hard work on the job. Unlike his childhood, Black felt the community was now providing him the support and accountability he never had while growing up. As he presently had accountability through the shelter and his “IOP” probation requirements, Black hoped he could continue to find such community-based supports moving forward but was not sure where to find them.

Black relayed that in the past, his attempts to try to control every outcome had overwhelmed him. For Black, this quote he saw at his IOP program (see Figure 22) has helped remind him of the need to sometimes let go of the reins and have greater trust:

And it just kind of reminds me to just, because sometimes you just have to give it up and not be, try to be in control all the time.... Becomes sometimes that's how I get overwhelmed is I trying to control everything when I can't control everything. Sometimes I have to let it go and just, you know? Let things happen as they come and it will all work out in the end.... Like when we relapsed or whatever, right away I wanted a job that day, I wanted to get back in here right away, and I had to just give it up and just, I had to wait and be patient.

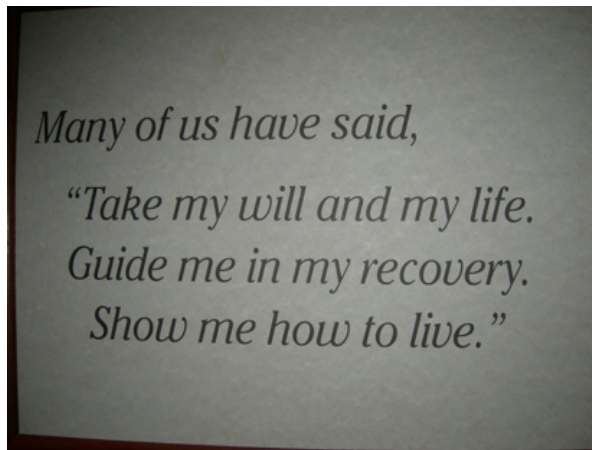


Figure 22. Black photo 3.

Recognizing the importance of readiness for change, Black reflected on how he has gradually awakened to his need and desire for change: "People have circumstances.... For me, it's all because of choices I made..... This time around I'm kind of trying to uh, take it all in a little more..... This isn't fun why I keep doing it, you know?" He acknowledged if he simply focused on finding a job and sought out cheap housing without making any lifestyle changes, then history would repeat itself. As he said, he is now "trying to remember where I came from ... like I said this ain't the first time, and it's not gonna, nothing's gonna change if I don't change. It's kind of sucks it's taking me this long to learn that." Part of this involved being wary of temptations, triggers, and the potential for relapse. Black stated, "Yeah, I need to do be aware, be scared of it kinda. Because it could just end up just as bad as it always has, even worse." His present sobriety has also allowed him to see his strength within. As he relayed, "When I'm sober I have so much potential. It kind of surprises me how quickly I can bounce back.... But then again I always in the back of my head, I understand how quickly I can fall."

B.P.

B.P. is a 40-year-old proud Jewish man who graduated from high school and has completed some college courses toward a degree in Criminal Justice. Although unemployed, B.P. said he receives disability payments and money on his Quest card for food stamps. With regard to his disability, B.P. utilized a wheelchair and an absorbing tarp, having become paralyzed from the waist down following an incident when his grandfather shot him. During my time speaking with him, B.P. was in the midst of his fourth episode of homelessness and had been homeless for 16 months after having been unfairly evicted by his landlord while laid up in the hospital for an extended stay. Having been intermittently homeless for around 10 years of his life altogether, previous homelessness episodes were related to a combination of conflicts with family, substance abuse concerns, and some trouble with the law. B.P. noted that as an adolescent, he was once in a juvenile detention center for 25 days and has subsequently been held in the county jail on 10 separate occasions.

When I first began interacting with B.P., I was not sure what to expect from him as during the recruitment meeting, he would drift between being helpful and engaged to appearing aloof or lost in his own world. This was a pattern that continued on the few occasions I ran into B.P. at the shelter, although I too might have been internally preoccupied as I had just recently had some of my belongings stolen like he had. In general, B.P. was an engaging, impassioned speaker who appreciated the occasional use of song lyrics and scripture from the Torah to express complex emotions. As B.P. correctly anticipated the interview process might “open up scabs” emotionally, I obliged his request to interview outdoors; he noted the outdoors and smoking were some of his

primary coping strategies, both of which he relied on throughout the interview process. Having reported myriad traumatic and oppressive experiences across his lifetime, B.P. recognized how some might view the persecutory themes in his narrative as “crazy.” As such, B.P. wanted to be sure the positive elements in his narrative were emphasized as he had already spent a lot of his life having to ward off negative messages about himself from others.

The “flavor of the month.” After his parents divorced when he was two-years-old, B.P. grew up with predominantly with his mother in the Midwest. Because his mother moved them away, B.P. said he never really knew his father or that side of his extended family. Other than a single phone call he had as an early adult, he really did not have any contact with his father whatsoever. Sadly, that side of the family has since passed away, barring B.P. from ever knowing them. Growing up in a single parent home, life with his mother was not exactly stable. Reflecting on how often they moved during his childhood, he shared, “The grade school years, supposedly the developmental years or whatever, most important, I was at like a different grade school, literally every year.” Through the years and despite all of the inherent instability, B.P. felt his mother was his “only constant.” He described his mother as having been an attractive woman who was capable of working to earn a living “legally.”

Although B.P. did not go hungry and always had a roof over his head in childhood, their financial circumstances were often tight. Somewhat impoverished, B.P. said he had the importance of money instilled in him from an early age. He recalled one incident in the third grade during which he was selling classmates laxatives, passing them off as candy, in order to try to make some money. Not having realized the potential

consequences of his actions, B.P. suddenly found himself in trouble at school at an early age: “I believe I got kicked out of that school, it was third grade, and sent to a different school, and um, I, I moved around all the time so I never was really comfortable in one place.” Not only did instability and early poverty make B.P. financially conscious from an early age, it also influenced how he felt about himself:

I didn't really have money for clothing most of the time, so, but, you know, try to dress somewhat cool or whatever. It was obvious I didn't have money, so let's go to the other extreme and put holes and stuff, maybe, and look that way. They called us scrubs. I remember that, we were called scrubs. And I, I remember being very concerned about being my weight, when I was really young. Like I used to suck in my gut and I, somehow I can hold my gut in and still breathe and still talk while holding in my gut. I somehow learned to do that. It's very unusual. Trying to cover up the fact that I had a lot of fat from when I was a child, and uh, so I was very self-conscious and I think that held me back. Because instead of saying things I wanted to, or doing things, I was like unable to, paralyzed, because I was so self-conscious.

Despite some of her positive attributes, B.P.'s relationship with his mother was not unlike their living situation, often unstable and unpredictable. It was common for his mother to flip back and forth between days of exhibiting care alongside days of abuse and neglect. More often than not, his mom was either at work or partying. It was there that B.P. was exposed to the bar scene at an early age as his mother would regularly go to watch various boyfriends' bands play. For B.P., worse yet were the times when he was left with money to fend for himself or left behind at the babysitter. Recollecting this period of his life, he shared,

For several years I was dragged around the local band scene before I was even 10 years, bar scene, local bar scene before I was even 10-years-old. You know, from like 5 to 10 or 11, just dragged to bar, after bar, after bar, for live bands, then some, so she didn't have to spend money on a babysitter.... I can remember being at the babysitter's that night, laying on the living room floor of her trailer, in the darkness listening to my birthday gift, and every time I would see the headlights of a vehicle, or perhaps hear the car, my heart rate would increase and I

would get excited thinking is that my mother, did she finally come to pick me up? And that was on my birthday.

B.P. appeared to have tried to cope with these relational dynamics by taking on a negative sense of self, acting out at school, and all the while working hard to try to please his mother and make her proud: “I always wanted to do things to make my mom happy, like, I uh, I learned how to cook very well, very well, very good, and to keep a clean house.” Whether directly related or not, it was noteworthy that B.P. began to take a prescription for Ritalin from age five on until the end of high school. In general, he expressed the dynamic of him trying to please others to earn their respect and love as well as him being most happy when making others happy as a consistent thread across his various relationships. He also said he felt as though his tendency to always tend to others’ needs and not his own had held him back over the years. Similarly problematic for B.P., having growing up in a permissive, neglectful environment wherein he was rarely disciplined appropriately and lacked structured responsibilities, he felt as though he never truly grew up.

While he craved his mother’s attention, he also had a healthy fear of the various men, or so-called “flavor of the month” boyfriends, she dated over the years. In describing them, he shared, “The majority of the men that she was with, almost all of them were, you know, all hard partiers, they partied hard. Or they were extremists. All about making money, and all about partying very hard.” B.P. found it challenging to have a succession of different people over the years who would try to tell him what to do. This instability of his mother’s dating relationships was partly accountable for their instability in living environments as well. As he recalled, “We would be in a different house with some different yahoo around, you know bossing me around or telling me what

to do, or trying to discipline and control me.” Oftentimes, instability was the least of B.P.’s concerns.

His mother’s relationships were typically marred by unpredictable violence, either toward her or B.P. Although never protected himself and often abused by his mother as well, when it came to domestic violence, B.P. was very protective of his mother: “So I guess like, worshipped my mother, loved her so much, and it got to the point where our relationship was, I would always jump in and intervene if somebody, one of her boyfriends was treating her badly.” Further describing this dynamic, he said their “relationship got to be where I was my mother’s savior, I was her protector, her superman, I was always sticking up for her. I was always, you know, jumping in the way of somebody being mean to her.” Yet no matter how much he tried to love and protect his mother, she seemed to repeatedly find herself in similar situations and relationships. Upon reflecting on why someone might stay in an abusive relationship as opposed to choosing to be with the nice guy, it was with sad bewilderment that he expressed, “And I just, I can’t comprehend, I don’t understand people of that nature, and yet I do my best to still be kind to them.”

Among his mother’s litany of abusive relationships, the worst came when B.P. was in the fifth or sixth grade. B.P. recalled being routinely physically abused by this man. He described one harrowing night in particular during which he had intervened when his mother was being abused. His intervention had provided enough of a distraction for them both to get out of the house, although B.P. recollected being shot at as he ran toward a nearby cornfield. B.P. shared that when this man eventually caught up to him, he was physically beaten until he was unconscious. While he could not say for

sure, B.P. suspected he might have been sexually abused at this time as well. Almost as though nothing had happened, B.P. said, “They sent me to school the next day; and it should be public record or acknowledged somewhere I guess, but they sent me directly to the social worker.” And so B.P. told the social worker at school of his account, only to have his mother protect the boyfriend by claiming she had been the one who hit B.P. Although a part of him suspected his mother was afraid, he also felt his mother was not ready to give up the lifestyle afforded by this powerful, drug-dealing partner. B.P. was resentful of the fact that his mother did not have his safety in mind. Angrily, he relayed, “It wasn’t until he beat her that she finally left him and stayed away from him. Beating me was acceptable to her.” Overall, encounters such as these, wherein he was repeatedly placed back into an abusive environment, led B.P. to feel let down by social workers, the police, and others whose duty it was to protect him.

Early exposure, late exposure, and adultification. Although harmful dynamics persisted, B.P. noted he had somewhat greater stability as a result of his mother obtaining an LPN job and marrying her “American” husband. B.P. described him as her “American” husband as he noted his mother’s divorce from her first husband was not sanctioned in the eyes of Judaism. B.P. wound up working at his stepfather’s pizzeria, noting he had developed a fairly strong work ethic from his time there. Later on as a teenager, B.P. began working at a vacuum repair shop. Despite the benefits of developing a sense of responsibility, these early work environments further contributed to B.P.’s early exposure to substance use. His lack of adequate supervision, discipline, and guidance also continued throughout this time of his life:

I never really had structure, discipline. I pretty much raised myself during that time. I was come from a single-parent home. My father was generally at work or

partying. So I, my days and nights were structured around whatever I wanted to do essentially when I wanted to do it. To go and be out and play, how late I was staying up, you know to feeding myself, quite often I'd be left money and told to get dinner.

Given the circumstances of his upbringing, B.P. had a limited number of friends while growing up. On account of this, B.P. learned to cope with isolation to a certain extent: "So that was a strength, being able to be alone. And I could find solace in being alone in the solitude. And entertain myself." B.P. had a close friend through his middle school years; he said this friend eventually abandoned him, indicating B.P. had prevented him from having romantic success. He described one other close friendship he had while in high school, noting it was common for them to hang out and crash at one another's home. This friendship also came to a crashing halt; this time, it was on account of B.P. discovering this friend had slept with his mother, which led to a serious physical altercation between the two of them. As he described them, B.P. said, "So those are my, my two significant friendships that I ever had, and both of them hurt me." Having initially had a sense of trust and safety in these friendships, B.P. noted he still found himself on edge and worrying about possible ulterior motives when others offered him kindness or connection:

Now I've got a hard time just, trusting guys even, like, what are they really want, what do they truly want.... So I'm not really wanting to get real close to people. If I get, if I start getting too close I'll do something to, to, so I can pull it apart, or so they'll get mad at me.

Rejected by peers he had considered friends and continuing to find himself disappointed at home, B.P. found himself getting into trouble with the police at some point in high school. It was around this time that B.P. began smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and engaging in some drug use. As much as B.P. loved his mother at the time,

he ultimately felt like she held him back. It hurt him that he felt like a burden that his mother was always trying to get out of the way. On top of this, what few prosocial interests or talents B.P. had at the time were never supported. B.P. recalled,

My mother never came to a practice, she didn't once come to a game. In three years she didn't come to any event.... She never encouraged me to go to any event, she never positively reinforced my self-esteem, or me going to be a member of a sport group or an extracurricular group.

Perhaps more troubling to B.P. in retrospect was the fact his mother did not inform him he was actually Jewish until he was 18-years-old. While this late exposure came as a big surprise to B.P., by that point he was too preoccupied with other involvements and his own substance use to care. This revelation has since become very important to B.P. as his religious and ethnic background has now become a defining part of his identity and a major source of coping for him.

Tough love and homelessness. By the time B.P. had reached adulthood, he had already spent time in a juvenile detention center, had run-ins with the police, been engaged in substance use, and moved out of the home. Although not stated directly, B.P. insinuated he might have engaged in some drug dealing for a period of time to help make ends meet. The first time B.P. was exposed to crack cocaine was a highly influential moment in his life. Having taken Ritalin from age 5 to 18, B.P. noted the effects of crack cocaine were surprisingly similar to Ritalin: “With crack cocaine, that, from the very first time I did it I was somehow instantly hooked. I personally feel that has a lot to do with all the years I was on Ritalin.” His emergent addiction to crack cocaine played a major role in B.P.’s first experience of homelessness as he quickly began prioritizing drugs over paying rent with the limited income he had: “And then I began to not care about rent, to care about the crack cocaine, it was more important than paying the rent for some idiotic

reason.” Although he took accountability for his actions, B.P. relayed he has a harder time explaining his current homelessness: “I used to think that was what caused my homelessness, but here I am, it’s been seven plus years and I haven’t done any crack cocaine, and yet I’m in a homeless shelter.”

Finding himself homeless, B.P. initially tried returning home for support only to find he was even less welcome than he had been as a child. When B.P. was 20-years-old, his mother had given birth to his younger half-brother, with her having sought out support through AA, and gone through a spiritual reformation of her own. With her having recently had messages of “tough love” instilled in her by the AA program, B.P. frustratingly recalled how his mother had contacted the police on him for trying to utilize her garage as a shelter;

She puts on these airs that’s she’s holier or righteous than thou. She’ll call herself a born-again virgin.... She’s a lie, she lied against me innumerable times, had me thrown in jail before. I remember one time, it was the middle of winter, and I was asleep in her two-car garage, on a piece of carpet on the concrete floor, and I woke up, she had called the sheriff’s department, had me arrested for trespassing.

In many ways, it was unclear what bothered B.P. the most about the “tough love” dynamic he experienced. On the one hand, he perceived his mother to be highly hypocritical and damaging to him. Yet, on the other hand, it was evident that B.P. was hurt by the drastic contrast in how he was treated versus how his younger siblings were eventually treated. Through interactions such as these, B.P. slowly learned to distance himself more and more from his mother.

Fortunately for B.P., he had a strong relationship with his boss whom he had worked with for a number of years. Helpful and supportive in many ways, B.P.’s boss was there for him when his mother had him arrested. In describing this, B.P. recollected,

I had a boss for a while, I had a boss from about 16, and I liked him a lot. I looked up to him. He was really a good, cool guy. You know my, my mom had me arrested another time, and I went to jail and I had no shoes on, and I was wearing a t-shirt full of holes, and this guy came and bailed me out, bought me shoes and a shirt, went out, his family and some friends were having dinner at an Italian pizzeria, he took me into his house, you know, was trying to encourage me to stay in school to become a better person. I, I liked him.

With the support of a refreshingly positive relationship in his life, B.P. noted he managed to graduate from high school and even attended some college courses. B.P. shared that this boss and his two primary friendships, while they lasted, were big protective factors in that they provided corrective relational experiences for him. As B.P. put it,

They were people who I felt comfortable around, believed wouldn't do anything to hurt me, that, that would put me ahead of a stranger, you know, would, would have my best interest in mind, and would, would, would care about how I felt, they were people that didn't say harmful, hurtful thing, degrading things to me, you know I didn't have to worry about them physically assaulting me. I thought if something came down, they would have my back and I would have theirs. You know, loyalty and uh, and that they'd always be there, you know? My boss, I always respected him. Didn't ever want to do anything for him to lose faith in me or think I was a failure. They, they helped me to strive to be better and to be more righteous in a lot of ways. To be a better human being.

With his boss, B.P. managed to create a mutually positive regard partly due to his work ethic. As a result, B.P. was entrusted to house sit for his boss over the course of a weekend. Unfortunately, B.P. made the mistake of allowing friends of his boss' son over that weekend to throw a party. Unbeknownst to B.P. at the time, they had actually planned to rob the place while keeping B.P. distracted and held at bay. This situation led to robbery charges being placed against B.P. Although the charges were eventually cleared in court, B.P. still found that trust had been broken and he wound up needing to leave town for a while after this incident.

Searching for family and the incident. From there, B.P. found himself seeking to reunite with his father and the estranged family members on that side: “I actually went to the spot where my dad was from, hoping I could find him. I didn’t find him but I found his dad. We went out to eat lunch one day.” B.P. had actually spoken to his father on the phone once shortly before trying to seek him out. Discovering his father was a police officer, B.P. found it both frustrating and ironic that his father, who was sworn to serve and protect, had never been there for him. This, combined with the fact that his grandfather only visited with him once during the six-month period he was living in the area, contributed to B.P. feeling as though his own family further rejected him.

Returning to the Midwest disappointed, B.P. would spend the next four to five years homeless or in temporary living conditions. While B.P. expressed having some regrets about his prior substance abuse, he also professed they certainly made his earlier experiences with homelessness more bearable at the time. In addition to his drug use, B.P. noted that music had been a mainstay in his ability to cope with homelessness and other life stressors (see Figure 23): “Music I derive a lot from music. Music keeps me going for a lot.”



Figure 23. B.P. photo 1.

B.P. was 27 when the incident happened. Still homeless and using drugs at the time, B.P. had tried to go back home to his mother. Finding his presence as unwelcome as always, the minor conflict that resulted quickly escalated. Fleeing the home, B.P. was shot multiple times by his maternal grandfather as he was trying to get away. It was on account of this incident that B.P. became paralyzed from the waist down from that point forward. B.P. holds his mother largely responsible for influencing his grandfather's attempt to kill him;

She's, I'm a, I've been afraid of her, I think when I was in XX that she was actually helping, she was wanting me killed. Her father, the man who shot me, I think part of the reason he shot me was the things that mother, input that mother had given him.

Fortunately for B.P., he managed to survive despite the severe injuries caused by multiple gunshot wounds. Through his long recovery process, B.P. had to draw on sources of strength to carry on. In particular, B.P. named his hope for one day meeting a woman and having a meaningful relationship as having helped him make it through: "I think that had a lot to do with me not dying and leaving this world when I was shot, is because I wanted to stay and experience love and marriage."

While his recovery from his injuries was certainly trying, B.P. received support from his medical providers and even managed to curb his crack cocaine addiction over the course of this period. Through his recovery process, B.P. also arranged to obtain subsidized housing in the Rocky Mountain region that would have been manageable with his income disability insurance. And so at the age of 31, B.P. attempted to move to the Rocky Mountain region. His sojourn was short-lived, however, as B.P. found himself quickly drawn back to the Midwest out of concern for his mother's wellbeing.

Describing this time, he shared,

So I made a decision that I could save my mother, like I had been conditioned, groomed, and brought up to save her as a child, I still had that thought in my head. And I ended up turning down my subsidized apartment and being here in the state where I consider my home and my promised land, and I went back to XX to try to save my mother, and it was February, it was colder there than it was here, I'm paralyzed in a wheelchair, nowhere to go, she wouldn't even let me come into her house. And I ended up falling into the same behavior that I had prior to coming.

B.P. recalled painfully how his mother had told him she hated him in addition to her not having denied his insinuation that she had wanted him dead. Rejected, paralyzed, homeless, and out in the cold, B.P. relapsed with his addiction for the next few years.

A place of his own. Despite this setback, B.P. managed to get an apartment for himself in the Midwest. Having obtained his own place of residence and successfully fulfilled the terms of his lease, B.P. beamed with pride: "I had so much pride because, you know I understand the majority of society does this all the time. They pay their bills on time, they maintain a residency of their own, and yet, I never did that." Although originally living on his own, B.P. noted he had a handful of roommates who wound up living with him; the last one staying with him for the latter seven years of his time there. He recalled his first roommate was a Muslim man who had been in need of shelter at the time. B.P. said his decision to let this man stay with him was a "misk, a Hebrew word for good deed or a commandment." Having so relished his experiences there, B.P. indicated the loss of what he had made his current homelessness sting all that much more: "Prior to understanding how wonderful it is to have my own place, homelessness didn't bother me to the extent it does now."

While B.P. had maintained his residence at the same location until November 2012, he shared he had felt insecure and worried about losing the place on a daily basis. This was partly due to having complications with an under-responsive landlord. He

recalled how “every week I would still worry about losing the home, and I would always talk to my roommate, like, “We need to save money and put a down payment on a house. We need a place of our own.””

Yet by and large, this was a highly stable, successful, and positive time in B.P.’s life. With sobriety, greater stability, and him avoiding damaging relationships, B.P. shared he had generally felt pretty good about himself over the past seven to eight years. Having had service dogs throughout this time also assisted him. B.P. expressed he felt the love, connection, and support he had during this time was what had truly enabled him to stop using crack cocaine again. It was for these reasons B.P. was highly critical of the “tough love” approach his mother had tried to employ over the years. While he could see how tough love might have helped to a point, he asserted,

But when I quit I was surrounded by love; and when I quit, I didn’t want to lose that love and that’s the reason I quit. And then I come to find out that maybe I never really had love. I just had kindness and decency. And maybe they were pretending to care about me and love me, but none of that matters, because *I* was in love with having my own place, *I* was in love with having somebody with me all the time, *I* was in love with having people around me that would talk to me, and listen to me, and treat me as an equal. And they didn’t say you quit doing this or I’m leaving you. They didn’t have to say anything! I just knew, and I quit because I was around love. I was being treated good, and because I was being treated good it enabled me, it empowered me to stop the negative behavior. So, I wasn’t given tough love or threats or ultimatums, I was just simply given love. And I quit.

Injury, eviction, and nursing homes. Things took an unexpected turn for B.P. in September of 2012 when he eventually discovered an injury his paralysis had prevented him from noticing and attending to sooner. This injury wound up requiring hospitalization for B.P. until November of that year. Yet to B.P., this was just one more bump in the road he would have to endure. As he said, “Probably couldn’t even recollect all the hardships that I’ve bounced back and overcame, made it through.” At the same

time, B.P. came to view this hospitalization as fortuitous in some ways as his time there was what inspired him to connect with and delve into his faith. Judaism has been a huge protective factor and guiding light for him ever since: “The things I’ve lived through, survived, encountered and somehow lived through, to me there is no doubt that there is a supreme being at work here.”

Upon discharge from the hospital, B.P. discovered his landlord had taken advantage of his circumstances. He recalled with frustration how “the landlord broke in, knowing I was in the hospital, and changed the deadbolts, taking in essence my, all my belongings and everything I owned.” B.P. attributed this eviction to the fact he had been recently planning to more formally voice his concerns about the landlord’s poor upkeep of the complex. Immediately following this unexpected eviction, B.P. went to live with some people for a brief period of time. There he felt discriminated against, taken advantage of, and powerless on account of his homelessness status. Describing his experience there, he shared,

The people found me disgusting so they only allowed me to stay for a month. And they took advantage of me financially as well. You take somebody off the streets who wants to rent a room so he has some place to stay, they’re desperate. You can ask for money whenever you want, you can ask for them to buy this or that, whatever you want. And I feel like if you don’t play by their rules, do exactly as they say, they can kick you out whenever they choose, and that’s what this house in essence did.

Since this time, B.P. noted he has been in various nursing homes. With a hint of exasperation, he said, “I had a serious injury and they, I’ve been in four different nursing homes since November of 2012, four nursing homes!” It was not until the following November that this wound fully healed.

Homeless “castes” and owning growth. Based on his prior exposure, B.P. still felt a certain calling to return to the Rockies, noting its natural beauty reminded him of the Promised Land he envisioned with his Jewish faith. While he still appreciated the geography of the land, B.P. has predominantly spent his time in hospitals or at the shelter since coming to the area: “I’ve had about something like 95 days in the hospitals in order to fix a potentially mortal wound that I had when I got [here].” As B.P. said he has often spent a lot of time in extreme debilitating pain, which he finds impacts his mood and energy levels, he has been highly appreciative of the quality medical care and pain management services he discovered here (see Figure 24). He shared that pain management has been complicated in the past given his history of crack cocaine addiction. Recounting his positive experience with the services here, he shared,

Fortunately I was blessed with meeting a fantastic pain specialist in XX who helps me on a monthly basis with medications.... I’ve already noticed a change in being able to get out and do things. My attitude, my personality I’m more personable, I’m sleeping less already, I’m getting out, getting more exercise, seeing more places.



Figure 24. B.P. photo 2.

Having experienced the joys of having his own place and being surrounded by positive roommates, B.P.'s homelessness this time around has come as a bit of a shock to him. Toward this end, a major concern for B.P. has revolved around his experience of being targeted and oppressed based on his intersecting Jewish, disabled, and homeless identities. Such experiences have not been limited to his time at the shelter or the state:

They say that there's, we have as human beings a fight or flight mechanism, and obviously I don't have the capacity for flight anymore, so now the only thing I can do is fight. And, you know, I've been jumped, since I've been in my wheelchair and paralyzed, I've been jumped and attacked on several occasions by different individuals, you know, so, and it doesn't bother me, I, I am, I'm not looking to leave this planet any earlier than I have to, but I'm not afraid of death anymore.

More commonly, B.P. has felt worn down over time by repeated verbal microaggressions: "I am susceptible to their nastiness. It wears on me eventually, where I become depressed and I, I get frustrated because I know I could be and I should be looking, and I have the capacity." B.P. indicated that experiences such as these impacted his mental health, time, sense of basic safety and privacy, as well as his general ability to work toward getting out of homelessness. As he put simply, "haters hold me back." They have also led to B.P. feeling as though he is from a lower "caste" within the homeless community as he has often felt ostracized and unable to defend himself.

Reflecting on this, he shared,

I can't be myself when people say these rude, prejudiced, nasty, mean-spirited, hateful things to me. I can't be myself. I can't even verbally defend myself even if I'm polite in doing so, even if I'm righteous in doing so, I can't stand up for myself for fear of having to pay the consequences, meaning being kicked out of the shelter.

In general, B.P. was quite critical about how he felt he lacked certain basic rights as a human being while at the shelter. His sense of powerless stemmed not only from his

fear of getting kicked out but also from his experience of insufficient support from staff at the shelter. B.P. described a recent incident in which he caught and reported a fellow resident who had been rifling through his possessions, only to find the staff's response lacking: "All they simply did was get my item back from him. Yet he didn't have to suffer any consequences, he wasn't in trouble at all, and now I constantly have to be on the lookout for when I'm asleep." Repeat encounters such as this have led B.P. to believe some of his fellow residents intentionally try to antagonize him in the hopes he will get kicked out of the shelter. And yet, despite all of the hatred, animosity, humiliation, and degradation he has absorbed, B.P. continues to bounce back. In fact, B.P. said he has derived strength from these memories as he tries to channel such negativity into his desire to do positive things and accomplish more with kindness.

Although critical of the negatives, B.P. said he would rather focus on the positives as he espoused the shelter was generally a good environment for him: "I don't really like focusing on the things that hinder me a lot, because all in all this is a good place, it's better than being out on the streets, I've been able to accomplish a lot." In particular, he noted it had been helpful to have social contact with others when he was up for it and treated with respect:

Because it helps me, like oh somebody cares about me, or likes me, or is my friend. Oh, I can, I want to get out of bed so I go hang out with them, or visit with them, or maybe we can go to this place today, or go see that today. Maybe we just sit around and talk, hang around.

Even with some of the negativity that came with his present circumstances, such as when he saw "people doing negative things or saying negative things," B.P. channeled it into an opportunity for personal reflection and challenged himself to stay positive. As he said, "That makes me feel good and carry on, because I realize I'm evolving." B.P. was not

entirely sure what to ascribe as having accounted for his personal evolution but stressed this had been a major change for him:

Somehow I developed the ability to like myself. And, that's how, I didn't like myself when I was walking very much, the majority of the time I didn't think very highly of myself. And now that I'm a paraplegic, you know, I think very highly of myself and my abilities, my capacity for independence, my appearance, the things that I can achieve, I think very highly of it all.

Having been through some dark and challenging times in his life, B.P. shared his newfound openness to life and others had been quite meaningful to him: "I'm really happy and grateful that my heart was allowed to change. I hope never to revert, digress back to the person, creature I once was."

Blue

Blue is a 50-year-old Caucasian woman who received her GED after dropping out of high school and is an avid reader. When I first began speaking with Blue, I noticed her long gray hair, some of the scars on her arm, and missing teeth she was working to get aid for dentures. Beyond outward appearances, any time I ran into her at the shelter, she was pleasant and sociable if not outspoken at times. She appeared open and comfortable with me if showing up to the first interview in her pajamas was any indicator of that. While unemployed at the time of the interview, having recently lost a part-time job unfairly, Blue landed a job with an insurance company shortly after I interviewed her. During my time interacting with her, Blue was in the midst of her fifth episode of homelessness and had been homeless for nine months following a flood in the fall of 2013. Having been homeless for around three to four years of her life altogether, previous homelessness episodes related to either the aftermath of a divorce or substance use, lack of financial autonomy, and heartache. Upon hearing her story, it would be easy

to focus on the negatives and hardships she has been through. However, Blue was very animated and sure to express her outlook had allowed her to see the duality of her rich and storied life.

The ups and downs of childhood. Born and raised in the Rocky Mountain region, Blue is the eldest of three siblings. Not particularly close to her siblings at any point in her life, with nobody having heard from her brother for 20 years, Blue's life has largely been marked by problematic family relationships. Noting she had experienced much confusion over the years from many family secrets and lies, Blue never knew her own father and described her parents by saying, "Mom has OCD and she's not quite all there. And stepdad was abusive." Blue experienced her mother as a "non-person," ascribing this to the abuse her mother endured in her first marriage. Although empathic to an extent, Blue grew up without much affection or support in the home and has never gotten along well with either of her parents. She said that to this day, "I tend to not, eh, not go around her if I'm not feeling good about life. So I don't need her to make me feel bad. You know what I mean? She deals with guilt."

Meanwhile, Blue attributed her stepfather's abusive manner to the fact he grew up in an alcoholic household: "You never knew what he was going to do. So he was fun to be around sometimes." While she had some positive memories of him from her childhood, Blue indicated numerous instances of physical and emotional abuse, relaying she also suspected she might have repressed potential sexual abuse as well. As she described it, "Leave it to Beaver looks good on the ins-, outside, but nobody knows what goes on, I called it leave it to cleaver, but whatever. We it, I had a lot of good years.... so a lot of the childhood was good, but when he went off, he went off, you know?"

Blue indicated the abusive and chaotic nature of her home life contributed to lasting medical concerns she still struggles with, namely challenges with her kidneys and teeth. While her dental concerns stemmed partly from lacking funds for dental treatment and being denied access to proper care, the loss of her kidney in adolescence and chronic renal concerns were later diagnosed as psychologically based by her doctor: “Because come to find out that it had died because of my abuse as a child.... It does not drain. He says it’s not physical, so there’s nothing they can do; it’s mental.” She now requires the daily use of a catheter. Poverty and experiences of financial oppression intersected with Blue’s medical challenges at various points in her life. As she said, “The money I’ve made, I can’t afford medical or dental.” Blue was quite critical of the medical treatment she has received, recalling how one instance when she needed emergency assistance she felt the medical staff did not care if she lived or died:

Doctors though can kiss my ass. They tell me, they’d say, “If you don’t take this medicine, you’re going to die.” And I looked at them and said, “If I have to pay you I can’t buy the medicine. Which would you prefer?” You’d be surprised how many of them say, “Pay me.”

Always one to consider the “yin and yang” of life, Blue wanted to point out positive experiences during her childhood. She recalled how summer camping with her family was often a fun time for her. Yet most of her positive childhood memories came from various relationships outside the home. Blue spent a lot of time staying at her grandparents’ home as a child, which exposed her to the influence of her sweet and strong grandmother as well as her at-times polarizing grandfather: “My grandfather was Archie Bunker. He was cool, you know?” Blue loved her grandfather, the positive interactions they had, and the life lessons he taught her; yet at the same time, she acknowledged he was hard-headed and could put her down: “German men are very, eh,

hard-headed: Archie Bunker. You'd think your middle name was stupid growing up."

At the same time, Blue found her grandparents modeled a level of caring for one another she had otherwise not grown accustomed to expect in most relationships. As she said with a bit of a chuckle,

Well, Archie Bunker had a good heart even though he was a pain in the ass. Excuse my language. Grandma was at his mercy and life wasn't always easy for her living with him, but how many men today are that faithful, you know? They came from a generation that took care of each other.

Beyond her grandparents, Blue also appreciated the long-term friendship she formed with a sixth grade classmate whom she only just recently lost touch with over the past five years. As Blue spent a lot of her childhood, and life in general, feeling alone, she noted it "has kind of been nice to have a relationship that lasted all these years. And um, she's still my best friend even though she did her own little running away thing. I haven't seen her since her mom died." She was also fond of her family's pastor from church while growing up. As Blue viewed herself as smart and naturally inquisitive, she enjoyed that he took her questions seriously, recalling how "he made sermons out of my questions." Whereas her mother would try to use guilt and religion as a means of disciplining her, she found her pastor valued her as a person and relayed with a hint of satisfaction that "he never did give me that hell and brimstone talk."

Losing innocence and losing hair. Although she might have had some positive outlets, Blue often had to stay at home and was routinely grounded, contributing to her felt sense of not fitting in and not believing there were others to turn to for help. Blue attributed her experience of being overly controlled to her mother's likely mental health concerns. Regardless, Blue said the impact on her was such that it "held you back a lot because she wouldn't allow you to grow up. She wouldn't allow you to do those things

that you needed to do to grow up.” Adding to this, she said, “So I was very naïve as a child, but very innocent, which was kind of nice, you know? Some of it.”

Eventually Blue began to rebel against the abusive and controlling environment of home, seeking a chance to “grow up” and have greater autonomy. As she entered adolescence, Blue began to run away from home on occasion and skip school: “School was good until I got to junior high. And then school hours became time to ditch and smoke pot, and rebel,” she said with a sigh. “We weren’t bad kids, we had to rebel. You know what I mean? You’d just, you’ve got to grow up. And if you’re not being allowed that, you have to get your needs somewhere.” When she was at home, Blue used reading, writing, and her imagination to escape. Reading in particular allowed Blue to break free from her mother’s control: “I was always grounded as a child so.... It was my best friend. I mean I couldn’t go anywhere, so in my mind I did.”

Blue still enjoys reading and has dreams of pursuing career options with creative writing. At the same time, Blue relayed she is struggling to find direction for herself; she connected her low career self-efficacy to the many emotionally, physically, and financially controlling relationships she was exposed to or a part of over the years. Although she did not take such a picture in her photo-elicitation project, Blue would have felt a Wrong Way sign accurately tied together her feelings about most of her life. Blue recalled with frustration how her mother squelched her pursuit of writing early on despite the encouragement and positive attention she had been drawing from her teachers on account of it: “That should have been cultivated. If the teachers were talking about it, that meant that uh, there was something there, right?” She added, “It was very discouraging.... Still today I sometimes envy somebody that has opportunities, because

there really wasn't any opportunity." Despite not having her interests and talents fostered at home, Blue said she still sees herself as smart and capable: "I'm a very creative person, I've always wanted to be a writer, and I don't know, I've met some very unusual people. But, it, I've, I've come up with my own little meaning, you know? I believe that we do evolve and that we continue to grow."

For Blue, the proverbial straw that finally broke the camel's back occurred when her stepfather cut off her hair and sent her to school as punishment. She recalled angrily how "when I was 16, I had hair, which was 16-year-old hair back then, so it was much prettier, but, a-heh, it was as long. For ditching school he took me in the basement and chopped it off." A final insult amidst a string of abusive interactions, Blue said she was out of the home a month later having married her boyfriend at the time. As she put it, "I got married to get out of an abusive household."

Nowadays, Blue's relationships with the family members she grew up with in childhood have become very estranged. Reflecting back on this period of life, Blue said that transitioned from being high to low on innocence and trust, which she found both hampered and helped her in relationships today. As she described it, "It's a lot of scars." While she believes she has become more cynical, she found that as her life experiences have become increasingly diverse, she has become more positive as well. Blue relayed she was forced to make lots of difficult decisions from an early age without adequate guidance or support. Looking at how these challenges and her lack of financial security have intersected in her lifetime, she said, "I've made it work, but by damn it's hard."

The first marriage and motherhood. Blue indicated she effectively ran away from home into her first marriage, which would last for 11 years. Together, they would

have three kids when they were between their early and mid-20s. In many ways, this first marriage was regrettable for Blue: “He wasn’t abusive physically because if he’d slap me, I’d slap him back, you know? 16 and 18 being married as children, neither one of us should have been married.” While the physical abuse was not present in this marriage, she did find she was controlled financially, medically, and thereby had her autonomy restricted: “If I did get a job he was jealous and made sure I lost it. ... That’s part of the reason I left.”

It was in this manner that Blue spent the majority of her 20s giving birth to and raising her children in an unhappy marriage. She recalled, “First husband, he was just an idiot. Wasn’t happy there, but he wasn’t a-, he was just an idiot.” Blue said she had reached a breaking point in this marriage when her husband decided to move their family to a community, in which she had no interest in living, without consulting her at all: “My ex, without my, without any asking me at all, he, he had worked for the Bail County, well he had quit his job, sold our mobile home, uh, moved us.” Shortly after this was when Blue elected to get a divorce. Suddenly homeless, she sought out the support of a former neighbor for a period of time.

With her limited educational background and the lack of support she received around learning to support herself, Blue said this has often made it difficult to pick herself back up over the years. To illustrate this, Blue brought in a document of her lifetime earnings. With years of either no income or income below the poverty line, Blue expressed that limited financial capital, autonomy, and opportunities to pursue education or career passions have all been major factors in her experiences with homelessness. With passionate frustration, she relayed,

Sooo, I was 30 somethin' before I was ever out on my own. I'm a very smart person, but no education and no experience, I can't make a living! I've tried.... But, uh, I have no idea what I'm good at. I have no idea how to get that job in the first place.

Blue was quite critical in her remarks around income disparities and how one's earnings do not reflect how hard they are actually working. Both while earning an income and while raising her own children, Blue stressed, "No matter how hard I've worked, because there's been a lot of hard work that goes into this life earnings, but it doesn't reflect it." At the same time, as she would eventually find in her second marriage, Blue shared the belief that "money can't buy happiness but god damn it sure makes unhappiness a little more comfortable."

First time homelessness, sacrifices, and awakening the past. After she divorced her first husband, Blue felt forced to "abandon" her children given her spiraling and unsafe situation: "I've had a very hard life. You know? And I did not want them to have it." With heavy sighs and eyes filled with tears, she recalled,

When I left the first husband, I actually took the kids. But I was 28-years-old. I had never, I had never worked. I had no idea how to support myself.... I had three kids which I had spent every day of their life with.... Um, here you might get a few tears, heh-heh. Um, there was no way that I wanted my kids to suffer. I could not live with my ex anymore, but he was a stable, him and his whole, he lived in the trailer court with his whole damn family! He was stable, I was not. I had no idea how to be stable with three kids.... So when he came to get me, I let him take his kids and I walked away.

While she understood the reasons behind her decision at the time, for Blue it has been painful that her children have never fully accepted her predicament. Blue found the difficulty of this decision was further exacerbated by her grandfather's scorn and judgment, relaying that "he was mad at me for leaving without my kids."

In hindsight, Blue truly regretted her decision, considering the fact her children ended up exposed to unsafe environments after all. Although some repair efforts have been made, Blue recalled a recent conversation with one of her daughters: “According to her, I abandoned them.... But, I did what I thought was best.... Then the second marriage turned out to be abusive, and by the time I resurfaced from that one, my, all my kids were on meth.” Partly because of her own circumstances and partly out of a desire to not interfere, Blue remained largely at a distance from her children for many years. Unfortunately, this also left Blue unaware of the difficulties her children experienced in her absence. Recalling a later exception, she said,

So we didn’t come in-between each other, but I did one, that one time, and my daughter had already had her first son and stuff. And I, I took them in, and then oh, in my own home, and I took them in, and they stayed long enough for me to use all the money I had, and then they went out on both, a date with their boyfriend and took off and never came back, and went back to daddy’s.... That broke my heart, you know? My kids have never knew the sacrifice I made and why.... And to them, I, I can’t blame them, I abandoned them.... But that wasn’t the case.

Other than the impact on her relationship with her children, the period of time following the divorce from her first husband was highly influential for other reasons as well. Most immediately, Blue was in a traumatic car crash with the former neighbor whom she had turned to following her divorce: “Three months after I moved in with him though, uh, well we had become homeless before that, but, we uh, were at a bar, left the bar intoxicated and hit a bridge at 85 miles an hour.” Tragically, both her friend and the pedestrian he hit died at the scene of the crash. Overwhelmed following the accident, it was around this time Blue began having molestation flashbacks and went through a period of dissociative episodes and general instability. Adding to the difficulties of wrestling with whether or not her flashbacks were reality-based, Blue’s grandfather died

from cancer with the two never having repaired the tension related to her decision to leave her kids with her ex-husband. At the same time, Blue said her faith in the afterlife and a spiritual experience involving her grandfather helped her cope with this loss. Despite all of these experiences, Blue managed to push forward. As she put it, “What other choice do you have? It changed my life.... But what other choice do you have?” Influential for her coping was the decision to avoid a relationship with her stepfather from that point forward. He and her mother had already gone through a violent divorce by that point, adding another reason for her not to associate with him any longer.

Shortly after this whole sequence of events took place was when Blue went to college for a year as well as began dating and living with her eventual second husband. This was another choice she would later regret: “I remarried shortly after; which is shouldn’t have done, because he was abusive.” This choice was also regrettable because she ended up turning down a prospective romantic partner whom she had met in college: “I was going to tell my ex-husband goodbye, because I had met somebody in prison in college, whom I still write to to this very day.”

This particular man has been consistently influential, positive, and supportive of Blue, albeit from a distance. When in college, he was the one who encouraged her not to refer to herself as a “dumb blonde” anymore; as she relayed, “I used to say I was a dumb blonde until I met him.” Blue had done well in community college, having enjoyed writing and learning about history: “It was a pretty big kick-off from being, you know, just a high school drop-out with my GED. I jumped right in the fire, but I had a 2.8 grade point average I believe.” For Blue, he was also instrumental in her ability to cope with her mother’s poor response to her having brought up the possibility she might have been

sexually abused: “When I informed her that I had been molested by her husband, that didn’t go over too well either.... He explained to me that if she had admitted it, that would have made her a victim as well.” As he has “been [her] rock” time and time again, Blue feels he has been the reason she keeps bouncing back. She indicated he was the only reason she bounced back at all following her arrest: “He keeps telling me, ‘Be positive, be positive. Because if you’re negative you create negative, and if you’re positive you create positive.’ And eh, he’s very intelligent.”

Money can’t buy happiness. Following the advice of some family members, Blue stuck with her eventual second husband because he appeared more financially stable. Unfortunately, this marriage also meant that had to stop pursuing higher education. As she recalled, “He bought two businesses. So with two businesses, I was too busy to go to college, finish, continue going to college.” Her second marriage would ultimately last for eight years, many of which were not fully by choice. Clarifying her refrain around how “money can’t buy happiness,” Blue disclosed her second marriage was highly abusive in every sense of the word, despite earning a higher income, than at any other point in her life. Giving a small glimpse into this world, she said, “He turned my whole chest black and blue one time, he hit me over the head with a pool cue, he broke my jaw, uhh...he...it’s bad enough when they can abuse mentally, physically, and verbally, but paranormally too?” Blue might have found a way to leave this marriage sooner but recounted how he would keep her captive in anticipation of her trying to leave, forcibly giving her pain pills at times to tranquilize her.

Although in yet another relationship where she was controlled financially, Blue displayed obvious skills in her ability to help run their businesses: “So I ran the motel,

and eventually he let me, well I had to fight for it, but eventually I ran the dart leagues and the pool leagues, and was quite busy,” adding that “I love people, and meeting people. So owning a motel was right for me, especially out there in the middle of nowhere.” While her lifestyle of meeting interesting people and living in a rural area was to her liking, life with her second husband was largely miserable. As she put it, “I’m much happier right now than I was with the second husband when we made \$85,000 a year.... Which I loved that little motel, don’t get me wrong, I just didn’t like to be bruised every other day.”

As time went by, her situation declined further with Blue stating, “It had escalated to the point where I was either going to be in a mental institution or dead, by ‘accident.’ Uh, because there was a quarter of a million dollars in that marriage, assets.” Years of abuse increasingly took a toll on Blue. She described it as “you get reduced to nothing. You have no self-esteem, no nothing, you know? You’re just a shell of a person, right? And I was afraid.” Incidentally, a major turning point for Blue involved a failed suicide attempt her husband callously looked on throughout. This event was a turning point because it released her from fear and allowed her to seize control. As she put it, “That’s when I finally uh, found the courage to leave him. Because it dawned on me that why should I be afraid of dying, him killing me, if death no longer frightened me?” Although not immediate, Blue found she had the strength to escape her abusive marriage: “And believe me it was escape, I didn’t just, I wasn’t able to just leave.” With the help of police and protective custody, Blue managed to get out of this relationship. Sadly, she is likely still married legally as she noted, “I’ve never had the money to pay for a divorce.” More importantly, this turn of events left Blue viewing herself as a fighter with an aim of

self-preservation, no longer willing to tolerate ongoing harm to herself at the hands of others.

A certain freedom at the bottom. So focused on trying to find a way to escape, Blue did not know what exactly she was planning to escape to. She recalled how “I’ve been homeless each time I left my two husbands.” What she ended up with was a certain kind of freedom at the bottom wherein she learned to make the most of her experiences. Blue also came to appreciate the opportunity to take a pause from typical responsibilities. With homelessness and life in general, she expressed, “I’ve learned now is that it’s not so detrimental, it’s all experience. Life is experience and it’s just another experience that I have to go through. Because we learn from experiences.... It’s not necessarily devastating that I’m homeless.”

Feeling she had “nothing left to lose,” Blue acknowledged she began to stay afloat and have fun by engaging in substance use and “prostitution.” What started out as a somewhat liberating period gradually led to a slow and steady decline. As she put it, “Drugs and uh...heartbreak. I had pretty much given up.... Which is I know, unfortunately, the stereotypical homeless.” Criminal charges and financial instability eventually caught up to Blue as she had been using any money she had to cope with heartbreak through substance use: “Somewhere in here, I got tired of struggling. And uh, was convicted of stealing.” Reflecting back on this period of time, she acknowledged,

I could have very easily ended up dead and nobody would have known it.... It didn’t really matter. Not at that point. But Janis Joplin was right, freedom really is nothing left to lose.... Not a lot of, not everybody gets to live a free life and know exactly what it means. I mean there’s, there is a yin and yang to everything.

While Blue took accountability for the felony theft charge she eventually picked up, she also spoke to her general mistrust of the law. She grounded this in her experience

of unfair treatment and sense of oppression she believed was caused by the intersection of the law and being impoverished. Anecdotally, she recalled one time when she told a police officer, “I’m not going to tell you anything because all I’m going to get is poor man’s justice anyway.” Summarizing her involvement with the legal system, she said,

They gave me eight years probation. I did four of it before I screwed that up. So I did six, six years community correction in, and finished that successfully. That’s probably the only years that I’ve made good money, was when I was in the half-way house.

After she had her probation revoked partway through because of substance use concerns, Blue began to turn things around for herself, eventually working through her community corrections sentence successfully.

Recovering and finding a place to call “home.” Although frustrated with the legal system, it was also during this time that Blue managed to recover from giving up and feeling dead inside. Blue attributed a large part of this to her motivation to reconnect with her children and her grandchildren in particular: “I’ve been attempting to better my relationship with my daughters. It’s worked with my oldest one, but my youngest one I would love to take a lie detector test with.” Blue’s son, who acted as a buffer for her, had also arranged to have Blue set up with a place of her own to live in after her release: “It was a little house, it was out in the country, kids, grandchildren loved it out there.” As someone who had spent the majority of her life feeling as though her autonomy was controlled by others or financial limitations, this was a very big deal for Blue. She recalled how this was the “first place that I ever got by myself that I was actually happy.... I really liked living there. It was, it was like coming home.... I felt like I had finally gotten somewhere in life.”

Through a friend she met at work, Blue had also managed to have a healing relational experience. Blue stated appreciatively that this friend taught her she deserved friends who were honest, truthful, supportive, and willing to celebrate her successes: “Because she said, ‘I’m not gonna lie to you, I’m gonna tell you what I think.’ Which, it sounds weird, but, I didn’t know what a true friend was until she said something like that.” This friend also helped Blue regain a sense of agency and empowerment, supportively challenging her to take accountability for the life she was living now. She recalled poignantly how “when uh, I finally learned what victim meant and I finally learned to stop being one, because you’re only a victim if you allow yourself to be. And I finally found that out.”

This two year period was a time marked by positive memories, pride in developing the nearby land, and reconnecting with family. Because of all this positive progress, Blue said it was especially devastating at first to have it all seemingly washed away when the floods hit. Disillusioned and at a loss, Blue was not prepared for how disrupting the flood would be for her. Homelessness this time around was harder for Blue to take in as she was entirely at the mercy of factors beyond her control: “All my other tragedies were self-imposed, you know? Divorce, drugs, whatever, this one was not my fault, so this one’s been harder to accept.” With all the losses and challenges she has had to work to overcome, Blue acknowledged with exasperation, “I’m tired of fighting.” And yet, while Blue had lost the space that had allowed her to reconnect with her children and grandchildren, she had been able to remind herself it is the relationships that are of the utmost importance: “As long as you still have the people, that’s all that matters.”

Aftermath of the flood and trying to move forward. The timing of the flood was particularly inopportune as Blue's workplace had recently docked worker's pay on account of "Obama Care"-related downsizing. Paired with her initial shock and sense of loss, Blue said she was not ready to transition to work immediately after the flood:

When the flood hit, I wasn't about to go to a, I got stubborn. Like I said, I said, "Nah, I'm not gonna go to a Day Labor service when I just lost everything I owned".... I didn't see a point in it.... I didn't have any clothes even. So what I did was ... I filed for unemployment.

Fortunately, Blue was able to obtain a financial windfall from FEMA-provided relief. She recalled how "FEMA had given me \$8,000 but I kind of messed that up." In hindsight, Blue feels she mismanaged the funds from her FEMA relief assistance. She indicated she should have taken her daughter's advice to get an apartment and take care of herself first: "My daughter told me I was doing it wrong when I done it, so I only got myself to blame." With what funds she had available to her, Blue had taken advantage of an opportunity she had to connect with and try to help out a niece she had not seen in a long time. What had been intended to be a mutually beneficial arrangement resulted in Blue being painfully taken advantage of and squandering her FEMA support:

It cost me \$3000 to get my niece into an apartment and get it set up, you know, so it was comfortable, because she had two little kids. Um, and then I bought the, a pick-up for \$2,000 because I left with \$5,000. Uh, first month in my niece didn't, uh, heh, come up with rent and got evicted.

Still trying to make sense of her loss, Blue's photo-elicitation project was almost exclusively related to the impact of the flood on her home and herself (see Figure 25). Describing the damage captured here, she said, "It's not even on the foundation."



Figure 25. Blue photo 1.

Given her elaborate descriptions of this home and her evident pride in what she was starting to accomplish, it was understandable how challenging this loss was and continues to be as she is now staying at the shelter. As she said, “It’s not the easiest thing to do, go back to that house. Because everything that’s mine is still in the house.”

After her niece had gotten them evicted, Blue found her way to the shelter, having heard positive reviews of the place. Although she relayed the strictness of a minority of shelter staff members reminded her of what it was like to live in a correctional halfway house, she noted, “I keep reminding myself that I’m here, that I have not done nothing illegal this time to be here.” By and large, Blue said she was very grateful for the shelter while also voicing she was tired of having to bounce back from seemingly desperate lows: “There’s good and bad that goes with everything. Right now, you know, being here with the ability not to have to... thank goodness this time I’m not on drugs and not in trouble.” Blue was particularly appreciative of the time she has been allowed to regain her bearings in the aftermath of the flood. Discussing her current predicament around needing to find a direction for herself, she shared, “I don’t know where to go, I don’t

know how to get there. It'll come, but, thank God for this shelter because it's allowed me the time just to reflect." For Blue, coming to the shelter was a necessary choice for helping her repose and be able to think longer term instead of jumping into yet another unstable situation she would hate. Explaining this dynamic, she said,

I can go back to flagging, which is what I was doing before the flood. But I'm being stubborn about that. And I would like, I'd like, I'm just lost right now. Like I said, I don't know what I'd be good at. I'd like to find something where I can actually make a living instead of struggle.

Although somewhat downtrodden and lost when I first interviewed her, by the time I followed up with her for member-checking, Blue was proud to declare she had begun a quality job with an insurance company. Sporting a new haircut on her way to purchase professional clothing for her wardrobe and having received news that funding to obtain dentures had come through, Blue was in better spirits and feeling optimistic.

Reflecting on her life as a whole, she shared,

I feel like I've lived a very fortunate, lucky life. Because I've done things that someone like you that lives the mainstream, will never get to do.... The bad, yeah, that was bad but my life hasn't been bad! My life has been very good. I've been a very fortunate, I've gotten to do things that, you know, I've gotten to take off on a whim and just go! You know? I've met very, very diverse people.

James

James is a 44-year-old, adopted, multi-racial (i.e., Spanish, Indian—Mayan) male who is proud of feeling younger than his age. He received his high school diploma and completed two and a half years of college on a wrestling scholarship, having been pursuing a degree in business administration. During my time interacting with him, James was in the midst of his second episode of homelessness, having been homeless for five months and seven months overall. Both instances came about after being released to the shelter from prison, which were due to his repeat offenses for DUI. Presently, he is

employed part-time assembling wellheads for an oil and gas company. When I first began speaking with James, I noticed his work-worn hands, his laidback nature and attire, as well as the chew that was regularly in his mouth. Beyond outward appearances, the development of rapport was aided by his polite, straightforward, and forthcoming nature. While any other non-verbal behavior was fairly unremarkable, James was quite emotional when discussing his hopes of being able to one day reconcile with his family.

The streets of Central America and the transition to the United States. Born into an unstable world on the streets of Central America, James initially grew up in a life of poverty and insecurity. While he did not mention having a father figure around, James relayed he and his mother had to be resourceful in their ongoing efforts to obtain food and shelter. Often relying on asking for money from U.S. tourists, he considered this period to have been more reflective of the word homeless than his current experience staying at the shelter. Although uncertain of what had actually happened, the death of James' mother was both traumatic and life altering:

I, I was I don't know, three or four, I saw my mother dead in a ditch.... And I think subconsciously that's led me into relationships that I don't go too deep and to, with women, because I think they may leave me. And so I'd rather be the one, I leave them.... So in, kind of security, I just, um, leave. I, I've done the same thing with my own family. Which is I know not good, but I'm in a process of healing that.

Thus, James believes the early unresolved trauma surrounding the circumstances of his mother's death has impacted him on a number of levels. His tendency to distance and isolate himself in the face of potential rejection has carried with him over the years.

It was not until he was five-years-old that James met his adoptive parents. He recalled how they had been on a Christian mission trip at the time: "Yeah, they were passing out Bibles down there.... And I was living in the streets." Much like when his

mother died, James' life shifted dramatically yet again when he was adopted and brought to his new home in the Rocky Mountain region: "I grew up in a good Christian home, uh, always went to church, uh, my parents were in real estate." Adopted into a White, relatively affluent family, the transition proved to be a bit of a culture shock for him. For instance, James recalled how he struggled at first with early food hoarding behaviors in his new home: "It was just subconscious that I didn't want to do without. Because I knew how it felt to be hungry." Although he would eventually work through such basic needs insecurity, he indicated his lack of relational security and his identity-based confusion would be longer lasting.

James described his adoptive father as both supportive and a "dictator," whereas his adoptive mother was "the comforter, you know? The pacifier" who provided a counterpoint to his more authoritarian dad. Describing his household, he shared,

And there was no fighting; there was no beer, alcohol, or drugs in the house. Uh, not allowed to have any advertisements on your shirt that said Budweiser, or posters of half-naked women or bikinis.... They were pretty strict. But uh, that's what it was.... It was functional and dysfunctional.

While James believed his early environment might have influenced his eventual desire to rebel, he said he largely felt supported and was exposed to unique opportunities on account of his upbringing in his adopted family: "I don't think they held me back at all. If anything they tried to advance me, in every way, which way they could." Additionally, James conveyed he and his siblings "were pretty much all each other's best friend." James was one of four children in his adopted family, each a year apart from one another. Given how close he felt to his siblings early on, it was not surprising that James shared it had been difficult for him to have grown so estranged from them as well as his nieces and nephews in recent years.

James' transition to a formal school environment was quite challenging for him as well. Diagnosed with "ADD" early on, James' high energy and initial struggles with language acquisition contributed to some behavioral struggles in the classroom. Impressively, and at the behest of his father, James managed to work through language acquisition difficulties in a relatively short period of time: "Well actually, my dad was pretty forceful for me to be learning English. So I think I learned English in about a year." Although he was able to pick up spoken English fairly quickly, he disclosed it took him far longer to develop reading fluency and he still dislikes reading aloud. James indicated it was frustrating for him to have been viewed as somewhat slower and problematic at school as he felt he was always a hard worker:

I was disruptive when, in the classrooms, but um, when it came to homework or the work that I did finish during my acting up in school, I always went to my room, finished my homework, no matter how long it took.... I always had it done. It was, it was hard for me because I'm a slow reader.

Respecting the family name. As his parents were strict, yet caring people who regularly took part in Christian missionary trips, James recalled how there was both an implicit and explicit pressure to not blemish the family name and to embody the Christian values his parents tried to instill. Recalling how this impacted him, he shared, "So any kind of actions we did outside of the house, you know, you didn't want it to reflect to the family themselves." He shared an example of this dynamic by describing how his first reaction had been a slight sense of dread when he had been voted class clown in the seventh grade. He asked the principal to remove this designation by conveying, "I know my dad's not gonna be proud for me to be a class clown." James felt a major theme of his life has revolved around his withdrawal from the values he was indoctrinated with as

a child by engaging in a lifestyle marked by alcohol use, chasing “skirts,” and more recently coming to appreciate the wisdom in those values.

Although critical of some aspects, James felt he largely had a good upbringing both inside and outside of the home: “I was raised up very good I think.... With manner and everything like that. Respect. Work ethics.” While the majority of James’ childhood was spent in the same home community, he shared his family had done quite a bit of traveling, even living in the Virgin Islands for a year at one point. This brought him a lot of positive family time and inspired an interest in travel for him that he would like to pursue someday (see Figure 26).



Figure 26. James photo 1.

James conveyed he benefitted from growing up in a positive neighborhood marked by a giving, reciprocal community culture as well as a higher socioeconomic background that exposed him to different career models and cultural opportunities. As he recalled, “It felt, felt real close-knit. Uh, basically you, you help your fellow neighbor.” Compared to more recent communities he has been a part of, James said he appreciated his childhood community’s nonjudgmental stance:

Not a lot of gossip, you know? Which you get in a lot of these small communities, you know you get one bad egg, and everyone kinda says, “Oh yeah, that’s the alcoholic guy.” Or, “I think he sells drugs.” Or, you know? Things like that, that you see around.

Yet even back then, James did not always fully conform to the expectations of his family and the broader community. A regular participant in a Christian Boy Scouts equivalent, James still maintained ties with a diverse range of peers. He recalled how he had “really good Christian friends that I hung around with certain times, and then I had other friends that kind of were a little more rambunctious that I hung around with too, so I kind of played the field.” At the very least, James felt he cultivated an early sense of gratitude, desire to help others, positive work ethic, and disinterest in pejorative gossip through his early community involvements. Now that he is no longer “on alcohol,” James finds those same values are coming back to him as he finds himself navigating the at-times challenging community of the transitional homeless shelter.

Another primary experience of James’ youth was his involvement with wrestling, which he started in the second grade. This was a turning point for James in part because it gave him a positive outlet to direct his energy: “So that helped my hyperactivity, a-heh, -ness, ADD and what else.” Wrestling was one area of his life where he felt consistently reinforced by his father, recalling how “he was very supportive in my sports and stuff.”

James said he gained confidence and an appreciation for hard work and dedication through his involvements there, conveying that “wrestling taught me that, it’s a one-on-one thing; you know, do your best and you get good results. And if you don’t, you lose the match.” He also added, “It taught me perseverance. It taught me self-discipline” as well as to adopt a “never giving up” attitude. His efforts in this arena paid off for him as well as James became quite adept at wrestling and even earned a scholarship to college based on his achievements there. James had a hint of pride in his voice as he recalled how “I was very confident in my sports. I was good. I wrestled for 14 years.”

Freedom from the family name and testing limits. By the time he graduated from high school, James was ready for a change of pace. With the aid of his wrestling scholarship, James was excited to be heading off to college, even electing to go to a school slightly farther away to distance himself from the strict environment of home. He recalled, “When I got to college ... it seemed like the pressure was off ... all the rules in the house, and everything, it’s just like, ‘I’m free!’ And that’s when I kind of stopped listening to my parents.” In retrospect, James has come to appreciate his parents’ wisdom and their efforts to raise him; but at the time, he could not wait to get out of the house. He shared, “My getting out under their thumb, so to speak.... So, it was a relief, escape from their authority.... And any which way you look at it, they were always, they were right. And they did the best they could.”

Feeling the need to test his newfound freedoms at the time, ultimately James came to believe he was only hampered by his rebellious, obstinate, and reactive attitude. For James, this primarily related to his alcohol use and his relations with women: “Didn’t get in trouble until I got in college. I started, uh, drinking and chasing skirts.” This was

more of a private rebellion at first until these activities began to take a toll on his finances and academics. Recalling how he had tried to keep this hidden, he shared,

If I would have listened to dad's every word, I would have got the same treatment. But I, I rebelled instead. Yeah, and when he kicked me out, wanted to see my bank statement in college, said, "No." Because I knew what I was doing with it.

Eventually dropping out of school and losing favor at home on account of his attitude and choices, James began to work many hours to offset his parents' withdrawn financial support. Tension began to build in his relationship with his parents as a result. Sensing this strain, James described an occasion when he tested the strength of their relationship by coming to his parents, pretending to be in need of money. Having found his pleas denied, he shared, "I told them, you know, 'I had \$6000 on my books. I didn't need your money; I just wanted to see if you would support me. And you guys failed.' And I held that grudge for a while." It was with these dynamics in place that James entered into over a 10-year period of working, engaging in various romantic and sexual relationships, and falling into worsening patterns of alcohol abuse. James managed to own and operate his own business at this time despite his alcohol abuse. Yet at the same time, most of his efforts with work were really geared toward supporting his lifestyle of excess. As he described it, "I'm always employed, so I'm always able to supply my own habits, or my own wants. Never been married, no kids. So all the money I've made I've done with what I've wanted to." Over time, his alcohol use became more and more of an everyday thing, even while at work:

I started my own little, with my, with my friends that I was living with, handyman business, and that worked out really good. So I had all my friends. I would do all the talking and picking up all the checks, while I was, they were mowing lawns and pulling weeds, whatever, while I sat in the car and drank beer.

Loss and prison time. Skilled, always employed, and at one point even owning his own home, James recognizes he has the capacity to be successful: “I have the knowledge, I just have to put it to use.” Yet James felt he lost this all on account of his drinking, self-excess, rebellious attitude, and some bad relational experiences. James’ pattern of alcohol use eventually caught up with him with legal consequences. Receiving his first DUI in his early 20s, subsequent DUI charges eventually led to repeat prison terms. James shared he ultimately wound up collectively spending about 10 years of his life in prison during his 30s and early 40s. Describing how he wound up losing his home, he shared, “I lost it because of my drinking and bad relationship choices.” At the time of his arrest, James had been in a dating relationship but ended up getting taken advantage of. With frustration, he recalled, “Another DUI and having a bank account, and then this lady was writing checks while I was in jail for work release.... And tried to drain my account out. That wasn’t a good experience.”

James felt some of the biggest impacts he experienced throughout his time engaging in alcohol abuse and while in prison were on his relationships. More recently, he shared he had been dealing somewhat with feeling institutionalized, especially with his personal space needs: “I’m trying to learn and I notice myself, that I am a little bit institutionalized.... And I try not to, but it comes, you know? It comes and I need my space.” He said this was a side effect of having had to try to stick to himself while in prison. Describing the relational dynamics of prison, he shared, “If you’re not part of them, don’t go around them, you know? Stick to yourself basically, and that’s what I did.”

Not one to have friends now except for present connections in his church, James attributed this to his time in prison as well as having felt disregarded and taken advantage of while associating with “fake friends” during his period of heavier alcohol abuse. Discussing his frustration with the lack of loyalty, he shared, “Having fake friends around when I had it, when I had it around, and then I might get in trouble or I might be out, they’re nowhere to be seen.” In retrospect, James acknowledged he did not like and was not proud of the type of person he had been when on alcohol as he would “use their weakness as your strength.” In essence, he found himself to be “a lot looser and a lot more disrespectful toward other people’s feelings, to other people’s property, to other people’s, general being selfish.” Yet if anything, his time in prison helped him realize just how negative the circles he had associated with were for him: “There are just people that’ll chew you up and spit you out.” A far cry from the quality of relationships of his youth, he relayed, “It doesn’t work like that in the dark world or the drug world.”

For James, what had started out as a rebellious withdrawal from his parents gradually turned into shame-based isolation and estrangement from his whole family. “So I isolated myself for sh-, from, for being ashamed of what I’ve done. And that’s being a drunk,” he said with a scoff, adding, “And uh, feeling like that, uh, I isolated myself from my family. Just because if, I didn’t want to admit and I didn’t want to hear.” Not wanting to reach out while abusing alcohol because he wanted to avoid an intervention from them, the divide between James and his family became larger over time: “Yeah, because if I was messed up, I just wouldn’t call. If I was in jail, I wouldn’t call, I wouldn’t write. I didn’t ask for money.” This was particularly challenging for

James around the time of his father's death. Prior to his father's passing, James relayed they would often argue about his life choices.

Because my dad passed away about seven years ago.... And every time, I mean it, he, he would get after me and say things, and my response was "That's the way you taught me"... But he'd, sometimes didn't want to hear it, because he knew he had taught me how to do that.... So, we, we had, we head-butted, you know? But uh, that's basically I, I was a protégé from him, you know? And that's all I could, I could tell him is like, "I don't know any other way, you taught me this way"... Because he said... "If you're not part of the solution you're part of the problem"... And to this day, usually I'm part of the solution.

Once feeling worlds apart in their view of the world, James has increasingly come to appreciate how he and his father had far more in common than he ever realized.

Building toward reconciliation. Following his two most recent releases from prison, James shared he became homeless, staying at the same shelter both then and now. James relayed he was homeless for two months following his first release, having worked long hours to be able to save up for a place of his own. Efforts there were short-lived, however, as a final DUI led to his last prison term. He wound up released to the same shelter as he said, "This was the place that I had been before, and got along with, didn't have any problems." While appreciative of the staff and all he has been afforded from his time at the shelter, James was more critical of some of his fellow peers: "I'm a pretty good judge of character, so I can see some people in here, what their agendas are, you know?" James indicated he has felt the need to be increasingly wary in light of his recent successes both in and out of the shelter: "I do feel that the more that you succeed in an environment like this, the more people are jealous of what you have. Therefore, they want to try to sabotage you," adding that "it's like misery does love company, or it just goes with the territory. Misery attracts misery."

Feeling as though some of his early kindnesses for his peers were taken advantage of, James has become especially cautious when it comes to matters around his improving financial circumstances: “I’m really touchy on who I tell or what I tell about my money situation.... Just because people are jealous if, you know, I’ve been working every day.” While he is not entirely closed off to others, often encouraging peers to consider tagging along at his church, he shared his prior experiences have led to him being much more discerning than in the past: “Here I just, you know, I’m always on, on my toes. Okay, why are they talking to me? And what do they want?”

Not wanting to get caught up in such negativity, James shared he has been trying to focus more on practicing gratitude, earning trust, and giving back for what he has been afforded at the shelter: “I feel like I should and I want to return the favor, so I do a lot of extra chores.” Expanding on this, he said, “I do a lot of chores just for the simple reason that I feel they’re helping me, so why not be helping them?” He has also been working to reestablish himself in his faith, having found a lot of support and connection through his church and his own relationship with God (see Figure 27).



Figure 27. James photo 2.

Describing himself as a “Jesus freak” and a work-in-progress, he shared, “I like to go to church several times a week to keep my spirits up and to uh, keep close to God, and I’m still working.” Although he dislikes the hypocrisy of some churchgoers, James has largely found his recent experiences with church to be motivating and positive: “Because I seem to have a lot more fun and uh, work is enjoyable when you have other Christian brothers listening to the same music you are, and talking about God instead of how many women they conquered.” With a slight chuckle, he added, “God chastises the ones he loves and blesses them. But sometimes I wish he wouldn’t love me so much. Because I sure feel like I’ve been chastised.... But then I’ve also, lately I’ve been getting the blessings from Him.”

Indeed, this time around, James is trying to take greater accountability for himself and his actions, having finally come to realize how much he truly missed what he had been rebelling and distancing himself from: “I started thinking that lifestyle is over. Let

someone else enjoy it.... Or be in misery. Because I was in misery.” Having had more time to reflect, James has acknowledged many of things he would have done differently in hindsight: “So if I had to do it all over again, I would not do it again. My life would be a lot different. And I would listen to my parents a lot more.” At the same time, he is taking the lessons he has learned to focus on the positive choices he can now make for himself and his future, particularly with regard to abstaining from alcohol use:

That’s one motivator that I have not to drink again, is that I don’t want to be in a situation that I could possibly hurt someone.... And end up in prison the rest of my life.... I kind of tell myself I’m divorced by, to alcohol. I no longer go to her anymore or see her.

Toward this end, James said he is learning to view his parole officer, and authority more broadly, as sources of support rather than the enemy. Not having held such a view historically, James shared, “This time it’s just being straight, uh, considering him like a help instead of looking at him like he’s trying to ruin my life even more,” furthering that “at first I had a really bad attitude and disrespect for them, but now it’s like, ‘Hey, hi, how are you?’ You’re human. You’re just doing your job.” James partly views this shift as stemming from natural, developmental changes: “I’ve with age and learning more wisdom, is that, you know, not, not all authority is out to get you.” At the same time, the consequence of prison is a deterrent constantly on the forefront of his mind: “The best day in prison is still worse than the worst day out in freedom.”

Another shift for James revolved around how he has become more frugal with his money while still making use of his strong work ethic. James expressed appreciation for how the structure of the transitional shelter has helped him be less impulsive and increase his financial literacy. He now finds himself engaging in longer-term planning and goal setting. Along these lines, James captured several images of cars to represent not only

prior regrets and his present desire to get his driver's license back but also a positive direction he views himself as capable of heading toward (see Figure 28): "Yeah, if I, you know, buckle down and save my money I can have one of those again. Usually like I succeed in what I, when I put my mind to it."



Figure 28. James photo 3.

James appeared refreshed in having come to realize the respect he could garner through his work ethic and interpersonal communication skills. While humble about it, James' diligent work ethic has earned him the trust of the staff at the shelter and the advocacy of his bosses at work: "My work ethic says it all.... they all are very, very happy. That's why I'm still around. Even having felonies and they don't, they don't hire people with felonies."

A major obstacle James has had to work through has been his own feelings of shame and self-blame: "Especially now that I'm sober, it comes back to me. That's how I, I do have a little uh, impatient-ness in me, that I'm hard on myself." James had been particularly critical toward himself over the consequences of having rebelled against his

parents: “In all actuality, this is where not listening to your parents’ wisdom gets you in life. Places like this. So, I feel fortunate to be in here, but I feel ashamed for not listening to my family.” While James might lack much self-compassion and empathy toward his substance use history and general circumstances, he did note he has been “trying to forgive myself first.” This has not always been an easy task for him: “It has been, but I’ve been learning, and I’m getting better to forgive myself.” In fact, his progress in this area was such that by the time we met for member-checking, he expressed, “I’ve conquered that,” regarding his historical difficulties with shame.

Now James finds himself turning toward his goals of reconciliation with his family, working to someday own his own business, and generally trying to be a good “Samaritan” to others in both attitude and action. Although tentative and in the early stages, James was fairly emotional when discussing his ongoing efforts to mend ties with his family: “I’m in the process of reconciliation with my family.... Which is, to me, more than money.... I know how strong a family can be together, and I know how weak a family can be without each other.” James seemed encouraged by his recent efforts at the shelter, trusting that his faith, work ethic, and desire to reconnect with the familial and communal values of youth would lead him down the right path. Describing his present mindset, he shared,

I’m nothing special. I don’t feel better than anyone else. I don’t believe in luck. I believe God puts a path, has a path for you and if you take it, I know we all have self-will, but if you, you know, sit back and listen and do the right thing, the right things are gonna come to you.

Vernon

Vernon is a 49-year-old, male, divorced (father of three), Caucasian individual who graduated from a major university with a degree in Psychology. During my time

interacting with him, Vernon was unemployed and in the midst of his first homelessness episode, although he had not had stable housing for a year. When I first met Vernon during the participant recruitment meeting, his demeanor was polite if not a touch anxious; however, this might have been because he also appeared eager to participate and somewhat familiar. I quickly remembered why. Vernon had been at the shelter the year prior and had participated in a different research project I was involved with at the time. At times emotionally restrained and apologetically tangential, Vernon's enthusiasm, interest in documenting and capturing his experiences fully, as well as his overall sincerity came through as he told his story. He was thankful for the chance to share and hoped that it could be of use to others someday. By the time we had connected for the member-check process, incidentally Vernon's 50th birthday, he had obtained a new job he would be starting that week.

Early days. Born and raised in the Great Plains region, Vernon relayed he “grew up in a middle class or upper class, um, and, you know nicer neighborhood. And we didn't really have much crime there.... We had a good childhood growing up, had a good community and good neighbors.” While he believed his relationships with his siblings were generally close, particularly with his younger brother, he struggled earlier on with his older sister and brother: “My older brother, you know, he um, we both supported each other even though we fought a lot, I mean he, we knew each other's talents, we know what's true.”

Before his parents' divorce, things were generally quite positive at home for Vernon. His mother worked for the school district and was both caring and supportive of his talents. Vernon appreciatively recalled how his mother would ensure opportunities to

foster his talents in the arts were available: “My mom did wonderful things like that. She kept up our oil painting lessons, and um, and, you know, just wonderful, remembering thoughts about that.” As someone who was never the strongest athlete, Vernon relished the opportunity to explore his artistic interests and develop a sense of worth “because it’s pretty cool when you, when, you know, you’re a little kid and you’re little turtle painting wins best of show and you got all these ribbons and you’re just a little guy!” Vernon’s artistic interests also exposed him to positive people who valued him as a person. He recalled his dynamic with his oil painting instructor, stating how “even though I was a brat as a kid, she was, she was kind and loving.”

In many ways, Vernon had a lot of admiration for his father, a doctor whose achievements allowed for an affluent lifestyle, family travel, and supported diverse opportunities: “I had a really good childhood. My dad was a doctor, OB-GYN, so we, you know, went to Germany and Austria and Italy, and France, or not, Switzerland, um, and it was, so we went skiing.” Partly because he respected his father so much, having later allowed his father to deliver his third child, Vernon always had a yearning for his father to be around more often and more emotionally available. Vernon recalled how “he was a doctor and he was never around. And part of that time, I know, I believe that he was with my stepmother.” This tension between wanting but not receiving the type of support and guidance from his father he would have liked has been a steady conflict throughout Vernon’s life. Vernon’s disappointment became all the more exaggerated following his parents’ divorce and especially so in the wake of his own subsequent divorce and homelessness.

Outside of the home, things were generally positive for Vernon. He noted he had positive neighbors and some good friends in childhood with whom he still keeps in touch on occasion. At the same time, Vernon indicated he struggled behaviorally at times as a child: “I was kind of a problem child ... I was smart and I did well in school when I was focused on it ... but I just, I was a little terror I guess when I was little.” Although he valued the counseling experiences he had as a child, he expressed a sense of vindication around having been found to be rather typical for a child: “My mom thought, you know, something was wrong and whatever so they take me to a psychiatrist, a psychiatrist and a psychologist, and it’s like, ‘He’s just a kid. He’s just a normal kid.’”

Family A and family B. As he alluded to earlier, it turned out part of his father’s absence from home was due to the affair he had been having. At the age of 11, Vernon suddenly found himself the member of a blended family with his parents having divorced just a year prior. Quite the painful experience for him, this exacerbated the impact of his own divorce: “That was devastating. And so I had first-hand knowledge of that and I never ever wanted that to happen in my own family, and here’s what happened, you know?” Given that his parents’ divorce was anything but amicable, Vernon struggled with the resulting divided loyalties he experienced: “I was devastated! I loved both of my parents. I wanted to be with both of them.” As the only child who truly elected to stay part-time with both parents, Vernon was exposed to the brunt of the post-divorce hostility. He relayed his stepmother’s criticism of his mother and his father’s requests for him to be a secret keeper had created a difficulty dynamic for him.

More challenging still was the fact he felt treated like the “red-headed step-child” in his new blended family: “Her kids were always perfect and they were always higher

than us, and so that's how she treated us, and still to this day." Part of the difficulty for Vernon was his father was not around and did not seem to care that such dynamics were taking place: "My dad just lets it happen." To this day, Vernon relayed he longs for a paternal connection, especially since what glimpses of it he had were great: "That's always been a factor that he wasn't there for those things that you need a father for, for guidance. Always been like that. And, and then, but, had tender moments and he has, um, really insightful intelligence." It also pained Vernon to feel his father had prioritized his new family over him:

It was rocky. I mean in, you know, my dad being a doctor he should've talked to me about a lot of things and he didn't, you know, and he wasn't there for me, you know, going to, you know sports and stuff. And then he went to every sporting event that my stepbrother did. And so that was a conflict always.

Unfortunately, Vernon's relationship with his father was not the only one adversely impacted by his parents' divorce. He described how his mom became increasingly isolated and resorted to having his older brother enact discipline in the absence of his father. Describing these dynamics, he shared,

I was actually physically abused also, because um, when I was growing up because my father wasn't there, so my older brother, he kinda, he had to take the fatherly role. And so my mom, you know, had, had him take me out and beat me up! You know, just beat me up. And I had a broken nose because of that and all that. And I forgive him and, you know, we've forgiven each other. But that was his role he had to step into and he was forced. And so, that was difficult with my mom because, you know, that's not right.... That was um, a difficult time. But other times we had very, um, you know, very bonding experiences to where, she, she knew my talents, my mom, and she'd see things.

While this made his relationship strained with his mother, there was still certainly care and affection. The two-year period when his mom dated a guy was particularly good for Vernon, especially since he lacked attention from his father: "One of the guys that my mom dated, um, he, you know, took me shooting because that was what I loved to do,

and my dad didn't ever do that." Vernon's interest in shooting and hunting hobbies has been a lasting one. Yet after this relationship ended, things continued to shift in a negative direction. The parallels between his mother's response to divorce and his own patterns since his divorce have been startling for him: "She became a recluse and she just pulled everything in and, and um, just lived a, you know, life by herself.... I'm kind of like my mom and I don't want to be like that, you know?"

Vernon recalled how his sense of humor, outlets for talents, and relationship with his older brother helped buffer some of his pain, sense of loss, and diminished self-esteem: "I really felt that I was good at certain things.... For the most part, until the, until the stepmother, stepfamily situation ... even there I had really good experiences and a lot of good things to do." Vernon's involvement with band and the influence of an excellent band instructor were particularly helpful during this time. Taking on his own paper route to pay for his instrument, Vernon relayed, "I played alto saxophone and I was really good at it. I'm not, not trying to be on a pedestal, but I was very good at it and I loved it." Having recently connected with this instructor on Facebook, Vernon's appreciation for what his experiences and accomplishments meant to him has been reawakened: "I really respect that because we were good! And it was because of him, he drove us..... So I mean he, he was a good factor. You know, after I realized how much of a factor after that." With his brother, Vernon felt validated as they would recognize one another's talents and routinely process how they felt their father relegated them to a secondary or "Family B" status. Not unlike his present homelessness, which has been requiring Vernon to reconcile the fact that bad things could happen to good people, Vernon said,

“Frustrating for me and my siblings is that we *knew* that we were good people even though that we were good kids and were talented and smart and all that.”

The college years. It was in this manner that Vernon progressed through adolescence with his fair share of ups and downs. It was during this time that he started dating his high school sweetheart and now ex-wife. He also reported he developed chronic back issues at this time: “I’ve had this problem since I was a late teenager.... So I had injured my back way back then and just had a bad back, and it’s excruciating pain. And it got worse and worse.” Between these factors and the dynamics of home, Vernon was not always focused on academics to the extent he was capable: “So my grades weren’t perfect, you know, up to through high school, but then when I went to college they were very good.” Wishing he had more direction from his father at the time, Vernon first started out at a smaller state school: “I went there my first year because I didn’t know what I was going to do, I didn’t know, you know, I didn’t really have guidance, you know, from my father as to what, what’s it all about.”

Establishing himself as a successful student, Vernon eventually transferred to a major university in his home state. He shared he was very actively involved with the Psychology Department, even having started a Psi Chi branch. Academically successful, active in labs, involved in a fraternity, and volunteering for an area crisis line, Vernon was truly involved in and appreciative of the campus community. Proud of his accomplishments and able to hone some of his interpersonal and statistical skills, Vernon had a strong sense of purpose and graduate school aspirations. As he recalled,

I was very active in doing research studies with the professors and I, I did some work at the loon-, well the, the uh mental hospital there, heh. And um, so that was all fun and, so I guess um, supportive I, I had a tremendous, I had probably the best years in my life in college. I loved because I felt like I was doing

something, I really loved it, I loved the people that I was working with, dear friends.

Indeed, Vernon seemed to have thrived in an environment of camaraderie and connection with a strong sense of purpose. The relative absence of such factors in recent past has likely contributed to some of Vernon's present struggles.

Work, marriage, and fatherhood. Although he did not get into graduate school as intended, Vernon ended up landing an IT position. Here he was able to put his people skills to good work, travel for work, and was quite accomplished on the job: "I traveled all over the place, you know, that first few years I was married.... I installed systems at Army sites across the world." At work, Vernon prided himself on his ability to know or read others, draw on their strengths, and be a leader; he has found these abilities to be diminished ever since his divorce:

I was team leader again there and I took really good care of the people there and became a manager, or, you know, leader and network operations manager and ... I had a lot more people and, you know, I just, I was able to turn around the, the customer satisfaction. Increased it by like 26% and the employee satisfaction by like 25% in six months.

Even when he changed companies and later lost his job during the "tech bubble pop," which led to him being unemployed for six months, Vernon continued to bounce back and find success. After working for a few companies, he ultimately opened his own successful financial advising business:

All of that time since I, out of college I've pretty much been in an IT position, except I did do uh, I was financial advisor for nine years previous to when I became homeless.... I was very successful, and 100% commission, and you know, no benefits or anything, I had to pay for my own insurance.

While he might have lacked the mentoring he had hoped for from his father, Vernon continued to find ways to engage other sources of support from whose tutelage he could

benefit. It was with this kind of support and the approval of his wife that Vernon successfully established his own business:

I met a person and he was, you know, willing to train me and, you know, kind of take me under his wing, and so we prayed about it and prayed about it, and it was the right thing to do, to quit my benefits-paying salary job.... And I consumed every bit of the liquid resources, you know, that I could at that point. And then, and then I got, and then the business took off after two years. So it worked out really well!

In addition to his early business success, Vernon had married his high school sweetheart shortly out of college. With three children of their own, Vernon recalled how they had many positive memories over the years: “I have all these just tremendous memories and fun times. And then, but they’ve forgotten that, they’ve been taught to forget that stuff and they just abandoned that stuff.” While their early years were marked by periodic work-related relocations that were challenging, especially since his wife felt uprooted, Vernon said they had lived stably in the Rocky Mountain region since the birth of their third daughter 16 years ago.

Despite their moves, Vernon felt the surrounding community was generally pretty positive along the way with the community his family eventually settled in being the most uplifting: “We had excellent neighbors! I had the best neighbors I’ve ever had living there.... So I’ve been really lucky that way.” A major turning point for Vernon came when Vernon decided to have the family join the Mormon Church after he had unintentionally and gradually been exposed to the church’s tenets by a close friend. Recalling this turn to faith Vernon said, “After like a year and a half of him telling me stories, we’d be out in the, you know, wilderness and beautiful country, just very spiritual and just good times... It was the right thing to do. I felt, you know, very comfortable about it, and so we joined the church shortly thereafter.” His involvement in the church

afforded him the opportunity to have reciprocal relationships through volunteering and fellowship. Throughout this time, Vernon continually found a strong sense of meaning and support network in his work, his church community, and his family.

Divorce and the subsequent downward spiral. Increasing work demands, back-related complications, and differences in parenting style began to take a toll on their marriage. Although his back concerns had been long-standing, a medical oversight failed to properly identify what was wrong. While he eventually had surgery, the prior confusion and pain put a strain on Vernon and his family. More broadly, Vernon felt his wife failed to support him at work and at home: “All these different things, just thing after thing after thing, my wife would never support me on it. And I was always the bad guy that had to punish them. And so she never wanted to be hated.” Frustratingly, Vernon said that since the divorce, his wife has started teaching their children the kind of things he had been advocating for all along. Although he was willing to take accountability for the negative influence of his stubbornness and obsessive qualities, Vernon felt like he unfairly took the brunt of the blame for their separation and eventual divorce: “I accept my half and she doesn’t.... That made it really difficult. Is that, you know, I, I didn’t confess her sins to people and tell, you know, tell the truth about that because it’s not my place.”

Prior to the divorce, they first tried to make things work through their difficulties in marital counseling. At first provided couples counseling for free through his church, Vernon was quite critical of the care and treatment he received. Articulating his belief that free services are not necessarily better, Vernon spoke to his experience of feeling misunderstood, mistreated, and sided against in light of dual role considerations: “And

that, you know, that's devastating. It's like, 'Well, it's free.' You know?" Recognizing ways in which this counseling involvement was harmful, Vernon tried seeking support elsewhere: "They just weren't qualified to, to help me with my, you know, deep problems. And so, so I went to uh, a private uh guy, and he had two Ph.D.'s, one in uh clinical psychology, and one in religion." Far more expensive, although worth the cost in his mind, Vernon was frustrated his financial constraints brought a premature ending to his work there: "And he was almost, it was almost twice as much as my wife's therapist they were helping with, um, and so he kept me out. And I was getting better! I was, you know, it was helping me!"

Already feeling betrayed enough by his wife, matters worsened when Vernon felt others within their church community quickly took sides on the basis of falsehoods:

We had mutual friends, and they'd have to take sides and whatever, and they'd go based off rumors, and whatever, and so, and I, you know, I'm half to blame, but she's half to blame, but she's seen as perfect. And so, um, I had a difficult time with my church because they, they just kept, shunned me basically.

Poor physical health, worsening mental health, and increasingly ostracized by the majority of his support network, Vernon found it harder and harder to try to maintain a relationship with his children. While an extremely difficult decision, Vernon eventually decided he needed to keep his distance for a while to work on himself. Given his belief system and the devastation he experienced during his own parents' divorce, these shifts were extremely difficult for Vernon to cope with. He said, "I mean families are supposed to be forever." It appeared painful for him to recall this time:

When the kids start believing that stuff, it's very difficult. And, when the mom won't enforce the, you know, even the simple punishment at all, you know, um, it's a precarious situation. So that's, and I struggle that I try to, I tried to be with them and, you know, do stuff, and time and time again it was just depressing, and

depressing getting me further worse. And so finally I had to give it up and say okay, that's killing me, literally killing me, my health and everything.

Despite his efforts to try to keep things afloat, the mental, physical, and spiritual impact from the divorce process ultimately forced Vernon to shut down his business.

Reflecting back, he noted,

While I was going through the divorce I couldn't take care of my clients as well.... so, I had to resign, I had to close the business, and, you know, face my 200 customers and, you know, tell them, you know, "I'm sorry but it was the right thing to do." It was the best thing to do for them.

The resulting financial spiral drained his savings and eventually to home foreclosure: "I rented a place for a few months and then I couldn't pay here, so she said ... she was very kind to me, but ... it was time to move out. So, that's when I became homeless." The rapid onset of his difficulties and the particulars of his situation forced Vernon to make difficult choices, most of which forced him to neglect his own health and well-being:

I didn't have insurance because I, you know my insurance was like \$800, because you know I paid for it out of my pocket because I was self-employed, and so then I couldn't afford it and I would rather pay for my kid's child support rather than the health thing. And I went to the hospital, and so I had, you know, tens of thousands of bills, dollars in bills, medical bills, and so I gotta file bankruptcy when I can. I just wanted to have, you know, I couldn't qualify for Medicaid, and I don't really, I don't like doing that, but I was forced in that situation. So finally this year I got it. And so then I was able to get the surgery.

Depressed, impoverished, homeless, wavering in confidence, and with unaddressed medical concerns, Vernon struggled as he continued to lose the support of both friends and family. Worse yet, it was during this time period that his best friend, the man who had introduced him to the Mormon Church, passed away. During this trying three-year span, Vernon's mother had struggled with dementia before dying. Trying to cope but still grieving these many losses, Vernon said, "It's part of the cycle of life, and I wish I still had mom, but, you know?"

It was on account of his circumstances that Vernon said he felt judged by the affluent church community of which he had been a part. He relayed that many, rather than trying to find a way to help, “looked down upon, they looked down their noses at you.” Meanwhile, others were misguided in their attempts to help as they either assumed he was not trying to improve his circumstances or naively tried to refer him to dead-end resources he had already encountered: “I went through the rigmarole and finally go to the right people, and then, but they, they stopped taking people, the waiting list, they had like 1500 people, and so it was a dead end.” He added, “I just didn’t qualify because I was a male and I was White.” The sole bright spot throughout this was the support Vernon received from a former supervisor: “He’s been extremely supportive of me and, I mean, after the divorce, because he knew the person I was and he knew the quality that, impeccable, you know, paperwork because I’m so perfectionist.” Vernon’s need to have somebody in his corner who acknowledged his worth and talents was a steady refrain across several critical points in his narrative.

Anything but idle, Vernon worked very hard to apply to jobs both in and out of his fields. For Vernon, a frustrating part of this process was how for some jobs, “I’m underqualified in terms of what they see, even though I still, I’m very good technically.... Then I’m, you know, overqualified for the menial task jobs.... I applied for hundreds and hundreds of jobs.” Not wanting to be doubted nor wanting to forget, Vernon discussed how “if you don’t have anything that, to show, and to prove, then people can re-write history and they do all the time!” Churning out many, many applications, Vernon began to develop severe hand and arm issues: “That was because I was sitting in front of the computer too long from the day in, day out applying for jobs.” Issues under different

circumstances might have prevented him from working and required more immediate medical attention: “But I was taking anything, and even with my hand, I wasn’t supposed to use it at all but, you know, so just makes everything worse.” Vernon was quite critical of the fact that many individuals fail to recognize the impact both visible and invisible disabilities as well as unmet basic needs have on one’s functioning:

I even doubt myself and when I’ve been to interviews and stuff, you know, it’s, it affects me to interviewing.... I mean mentally, and, you know, courage-wise, and having the composure and the, that, I’m still fighting to get that back, you know? Because I want to do so much, you know, I can do so much better and I just can’t get there, it, it’s, I mean, heh, not yet. Um, it’s not like I haven’t been trying, and trying, and trying.

Seizing an opportunity, Vernon tried to pursue a promising opportunity with a roofing company. This job required him to relocate but also provided him a place to stay. When this opportunity fell through, the timing could not have been worse for Vernon: “Actually the day the flood ... they kicked me out.... I had a roof over my head, finally I was getting my health back, and then, you know, they kicked me out and it would not stop raining.” New to the community and without access to the resources he knew, Vernon recalled how “I was displaced by the flood because I couldn’t get through the flood to my stuff and to all that, and I didn’t have money for the gas.” Fortunately for Vernon, temporary emergency relief shelter was provided in the aftermath of the flood but now he found himself further stuck than ever before.

The trap of homelessness and the ongoing struggle. Vernon’s hard fall into homelessness brought with it a sense of disillusionment. So accustomed to positive community engagement, believing in himself, and having positive supports to turn to, it was a major adjustment for Vernon to suddenly feel alone and navigating an intimidating road to stability. Trying to find a way to survive, Vernon began sleeping in his car, kept

track of every penny, and eventually recognized he could sell off his belongings to generate some sort of income. Not an immediate thought while becoming homeless nor an easy decision, Vernon began to repeatedly sell off belongings meaningful to him (see Figure 29): “That just kind of symbolizes, that’s one of the, that’s not a necessity, but that’s one of the things that, you know, from my, you know, from my family and from, you know, from the history that I lost.”



Figure 29. Vernon photo 1.

Being in a new community without true connections, Vernon tried to turn to the Mormon Church in the area. Vernon was frustrated by how insufficient the support was that he was offered, recalling how “I mean, just basic necessities. You know, I didn’t know, I mean my church was not, um, doing things to help me, you know, not just like

give me money, but help me.” He has also felt judged, such that he felt the church valued their aesthetic more than his humanity. Illustrating this, he shared,

I had to move the truck, so I moved it to the church parking lot. And rather than help me, you know, find some place where I could, you know, have shelter, I could keep the truck until I got back on my feet or whatever, um, they had somebody put a note on my truck that says they’re going to tow it off by, you know, like a, the next day if I don’t have it out of there. So it’s like you know they didn’t take the time to call and see what’s going on. It’s like, “Well, it’s an eye sore, you know? Looks like a homeless guy.” It’s like, “Well, you know?” Anyways, so, so that’s been the difficulty up here with the church.

Although his initial homelessness was marked by couch surfing and sleeping in his car, Vernon shared he ended up at the shelter because “I finally got enough nerve up to come and, that was November by that time.” In describing the environment at the shelter, Vernon expressed some mixed feelings about some of the staff and programs offered. He has appreciated when staff members acknowledge and recognize him for positive gains he has made: “The staff, they said, ‘You know, you’ve really come around.’ You’re, you know, they were really impressed from where I was at.... Then a couple months ago or a few months ago, um, it’s night and day!” In describing his attitude toward his present community, he said,

Very difficult. Very unsupportive, very you gotta watch your back, you gotta watch, you know, you get ripped off, you get taken advantage of, and it, it’s, you know, most the people that go through here they’re just fresh out of prison. And I mean, they’re wonderful guys that are, it’s just that, you know, my stuff’s been stolen, other people’s stuff has been stolen. And they, the things they fight about, you know, it’s just like, it’s not necessary a lot of things..... I have some really good friends, but um, but I’m still, you know, all by myself because I, I can only count on myself.

But like with the staff, Vernon has come to appreciate some positive people he has encountered at the shelter. For Vernon, a particular challenge has involved navigating his

“OCD”-related concerns around others and in an environment that makes it more challenging. Discussing this, he shared,

It’s embarrassing; it’s a huge problem for me. I need to get these things done, but here, it, I’m not complaining at all. I’m thankful to have a roof over my head, and I’m thankful for way too much food that they feed me. It’s wonderful, but then it’s, for my situation, it’s difficult to do those things. So, that’s another downfall.

Much of Vernon’s photo-elicitation pictures related to either his frustration with encountering poor service quality or reminders of how “in most of these situations, I’m helping other people and I’m being used. And, they’re friends, but then, um, but they take advantage of that.” Having prided himself as a nice guy who always lends a hand, Vernon spoke to how he found himself feeling taken advantage of:

There’s a big piece missing.... Multiple pieces. There’s dear friends that you, I mean, you know, lifelong friends that are, I mean I shouldn’t say that either, I have good friends here, but, but um, just, it’s just different because it’s a different situation. They’re fighting for their lives and trying to get established and, and so it’s, it’s not like, your neighbors are doing well off and you help each other, you know, back and forth it’s like well, you better watch out for yourself. And that’s been tough for me because I’ve given away too much. And I still find myself doing that.

In the past, such efforts were generally reciprocated for Vernon on top of the fact that he had been able to do so. He noted it has become problematic when he continues to give away his money at times, e.g., when he kept sending money to the family of a woman he had met online and been engaged to in recent past. While such patterns of connection and giving tended to have a positive impact on Vernon’s mental and physical health, he has come to recognize he might need to prioritize himself more right now. Finding the need to pull in and be more self-protective, he relayed, “So I had to, I climbed in my shell, I, you know, clammed up and, you know, I didn’t know who to trust and who to talk to.”

In light of his “OCD” and various physical ailments, Vernon shared he has been encouraged to pursue SSDI. With his previous successes and high expectations for himself, entertaining this possibility seemed somewhat threatening, if not agitating, for him:

They try to force you to, to go on disability! And that, disability is a trap! All these people that are poor, and most of them are able-bodied, which, you know, it’s a problem with people that could work and they don’t! Um, and, and so, most of them end up, they, they get a monthly paycheck for being disabled, but it’s not enough! And so then they have to work under the table for part-time or whatever it is, and they’re stuck! It’s a trap!

Per Vernon, the gamut of poorer quality of services (see Figure 30) in contrast to what he had been accustomed historically, which were free or reduced, were viewed cautiously and as potentially harmful (e.g., feeling discriminated against, being lied to, mistakes with his medication and surgeries, HIPAA violations): “Yeah, it’s free, but you know, if they make a mistake or if they, if they lie to you, that makes it worse!” Such experiences have made it more challenging for him to bounce back:

Vernon added, “They were prejudiced. And I was discriminated against because I was White. I wasn’t a minority and I, it was terrible!” Thus he discussed how he “didn’t want to go to ... the government-based medical programs. Which I was forced to do. I had to, to be able to stay here.... I had to go to *these* people.... I’ve got some pretty significant problems.”



Figure 30. Vernon photo 2.

Although it has been challenging for Vernon to continually ask for help and to keep putting himself and his needs out there, he keeps trying and has made some positive strides: “Finally it’s like okay, um, I can’t, I can’t keep doing these, I can’t worry about these people thinking bad stuff because it’s not true and it wears me down.” Vernon shared he was aware of pragmatic steps he could be working toward though he had self-compassion around how challenging it has been for him with his mental health concerns, physical health concerns, and need to contend with a backlog of responsibilities: “I need to do taxes for the last three years, I need to file a bankruptcy. Now that I’m on Medicaid, I have a health insurance, so I can file bankruptcy not that I want to, I’m forced to.”

Despite this, he keeps trying and is maintaining hope: “I had a good interview last week, so hopefully.... Hopefully I’ll hear back.” Yet with odd jobs such as his recent telemarketing position, there is a cost to his time and energy that impacts his ability to strive toward more long-term success. Explaining this, he said,

I’m struggling getting a job, and I don’t want to get something that, you know, just get a menial job and, you know, permanent job, you know, slinging rocks or whatever, because I need temporary work to build up, so I can get back into something significant! Where I’m really living, and it’s, it’s a struggle.

Also weighing on this was the fact Vernon is unsure of what and where his purpose is.

Not wanting to face his old community yet and not sure where to go, he shared,

I don’t want to stay here, you know, but then I don’t want to go all the way back to my, my living situation down there in XX, because of, my church and I still, it just makes me sick, you know, to, to be there. And so I’m not ready for that yet. So that’s one of the dilemmas I have, so, so here they’re, I have a roof over my head, the food, and I just, so what I need to do is I need to save, I need to get another job temporarily, or, you know, I applied for other ones that, you know, have my skillset. The bigger and better jobs, but I need to at least save up enough and have to stay at the job to where I can, um, move out. And maybe just a temporary place to live here, which is outrageous in price and they’re very hard to come by.

While it is taking time for Vernon to rebuild trust, he has made some positive connections with peers and helped out others. He took a picture of an area church (see Figure 31) because not only did his car break down in front of this building, he has attended services there, dated a fellow congregation member, and had his faith somewhat restored by having been invited along by a friend at the shelter:



Figure 31. Vernon photo 3.

Vernon appeared to hunger for fellowship and engage in the positive work he knows he is capable of wherein he could benefit from others' support and be able to give back without between taken advantage of but it has been a journey:

I forgive people and I, I, you know, have been up and down the cycle. Ever since then I've, you know, being, having complete love in my heart and forgiving everybody, you know even my ex-wife's attorney and her for all the things that they continue to do, you know? And um, and then, you know, so I've been forgiving but it's just, when you get that from, you know, 90% of those people, and the ones that matter. I mean 100% of the ones that matter, then it's tough!

Snickers

Snickers is a 51-year-old Caucasian woman who completed three years of college for hotel restaurant management before entering the work world full-time. She chose the pseudonym Snickers because she likes to laugh and she likes the candy. Indeed, when I first began interacting with her, I noticed her positive spirit, can-do attitude, and her easy laugh. Staff, fellow shelter residents, and I all responded positively to the energy and engagement she brought to the room. Snickers appeared open and comfortable with me as she displayed vulnerability and was even willing to fight through a cold during our

second interview. When I met her, Snickers was in the midst of her second episode of homelessness and had been presently homeless for four weeks. Much like her first episode of homelessness, Snickers was confident she would be able to draw from supports and her own strengths to bounce back and get back to a stable situation in quick fashion. By the time we had begun working together, Snickers had obtained employment and was planning to begin working full-time by the end of the month.

The sporty girl from Appalachia. With a kind-hearted, “wonderful military man” father from the Appalachian region and a “very generous, very loving, very giving, but very strict” as well as “very European” mother from Germany, Snickers’ life was never really destined to be ordinary from the start. Although she was born in the Appalachian region herself, at the age of eight Snickers moved into a stable, positive community surrounded by loved ones and a natural environment in the Rocky Mountain region. When reflecting on the neighborhood of her youth and how it encouraged play and engagement, Snickers recalled, “We would play kickball, and football, and hide-and-seek.... so I’d get home, do my homework first, and then I’d change clothes and go out and play. So it was a very close-knit neighborhood.”

Snickers grew up in a high-achieving, accomplished family that was also nurturing, supportive, and incredibly connected. As she put it, “We’re un-replaceable to each other.” Indeed, there was an evident tone of pride in her voice whenever she spoke about her family. Her mother was a nurturing, stay-at-home mother who was also meticulous and hard working. Snickers attributed this to her mother’s European background in wartime Germany and the entertaining responsibilities that came along with her father’s military employment: “Because of Dad’s stature or within his job, how

the house needed to be maintained, and how she needed to entertain top-secret people.

So that's how we were raised.... We learned to serve and treat people with respect."

Snickers said she benefitted from her mother's different cultural background and lived experiences, noting she learned how to look at a situation from multiple angles. While close with her mother and siblings, Snickers was closest to her father: "my dad and I were best friends." She became quite emotional and tearful when recalling her relationship with her father, partly out of grief and partly out of gratitude:

Dad being the, a-heh, wonderful military man that he was, but loved his family! And I was his baby. Uh, Dad loved to mow the lawn, so, a-heh, my first childhood experiences are following Dad because he got me one of those popcorn poppers. So, and he loved to fish! And I love to fish to this day. And before he passed away he gave me his tackle box and all of his fishing rods.

Whether modeled at home or reinforced in her community, Snickers was outgoing, involved, and had diverse interests from an early age. In school, she noted she "was the mascot, vice-president, senior president, you know, any school activity I had my parents were there to support me 100%." While aware of her strengths and past accomplishments, Snickers was sure to own her various privileges: "I'm very fortunate in that I was blessed with a lot of things.... I wanted to make sure that I didn't take advantage of them, but I used them to the best of my ability in a positive sense." Snickers' desire to be the "very best of the best" was fueled by this attitude and the sense of healthy competition she grew up with at home. Whether it was in the positive relationships she had with school guidance counselors and teachers, her active school engagements and citizenship (both past and present), or her ability to combine her unique talents and upbeat attitude toward volunteer efforts, Snickers was "always perceived as a very positive and influential person." In addition to her own strengths and natural

disposition, Snickers did not overlook the lasting impact of her family and community environment:

Having great people that you trust and things that you enjoy is something that you build on forever. Instead of having a negativity or something, you know, fortunately because of my parents I was able to get a very keen sense of if there's something you don't feel comfortable with, then don't get involved with it. And so instead of doing something bad, you continue to be and build yourself on something good.

Launching to college. Snickers' narrative was marked by numerous occasions in which she had to adapt to new environments and circumstances, often bringing an optimistic, can-do attitude along with her. She recalled having to adjust to the additional responsibilities that had come her way once her older siblings had launched from home. Her positivity and disciplined work ethic contributed to her ability to obtain employment and work to pay her own way through college. Yet for someone who was so attached and connected to her family, the adjustment to college was a unique challenge for her. She recalled, "Moving away from my parents' house and moving into college was an interesting experience, but, I've always been presented with challenges and I think I was able to accomplish what needed to be succeeded."

One of the challenges of adjusting to college Snickers faced was deciding between being true to herself or following her parents' wishes: "I'm the youngest of three kids and my parents always wanted a doctor in the family.... But since I was the youngest mom and dad wanted a doctor. So I was pre-med my first year." Although it took some time, Snickers came to recognize she was more business-minded and was able to communicate this to her family. While her parents had consistently supported Snickers throughout her academic and extracurricular involvements, they were initially staunchly opposed to this decision:

Once I called my parents and told them I was going to change my major, my mother's, her first comment was you're going to be a waitress for the rest of your life. And it took her about 10 years before she actually told me she was proud of me.... But we, we worked through that, you know? It was like, that was, I think, something from her past that somebody in the restaurant was just going to be a waitress, because perhaps that's what she went through.

Snickers attributed her parents' eventual acceptance of her choice to the repeated successes she had throughout college and, later, her career. Like in childhood, Snickers' success extended beyond work and the classroom. She made lasting, lifelong friendships while in college, noting that she and 11 of her classmates still have an annual reunion to this day.

The accident, recovery, and joy of work. Although adjusting to and finding her way in college certainly presented some challenges for Snickers, the circumstances that ended her time in college presented a still greater challenge. Before she was able to graduate, Snickers shared she had been in a three-month coma after having been hit by a campus maintenance truck while crossing the street. Doctors had told her parents that if she were to survive, she would "be a vegetable for the rest of [her] life" due to the extent of her head injuries. After awakening from her coma, Snickers drew from her athletic interests and relied heavily on family supports, competent medical providers, and her work ethic as she rehabilitated from her head injury. Neither the yearlong loss of her sense of smell and taste nor her temporary physical restrictions held her back. Snickers eventually returned to work and picked up new sports to overcome her circumstances:

I had to readjust my athletic ability, and do things and learn something that I was able to do and really enjoyed it and excelled at. So I built on that and just, you know, I was limited at something, I was able to learn something above and beyond what I normally probably would have never tried.

Overcoming this traumatic injury was quite significant in Snickers' life. As she recalled, it gave her a greater appreciation for life in light of what could have been "but I was able to overcome a lot of difficulties in front of me, and survive, so, that's why, yeah, I think I'm so positive because I could have been nothing." Partly due to the disruption caused by the accident and partly due to the success she was having within the company she had been working for, Snickers wound up pursuing fulltime work instead of returning to finish her degree. Considering the fact that she worked in the restaurant industry and had temporarily lost her sense of taste and smell, this decision required commitment and tenacity. Yet Snickers persevered as her career path was her "heart and [her] passion."

Thus, with a good salary, company backing, and the return of her senses a year later, Snickers embarked upon a long and prosperous career in the restaurant industry. Snickers recalled her years in the restaurant industry with both humility and confidence: "So my background goes, if you want breakfast in bed for two, or you want a seated dinner for 3,000, or you want me to run an entire championship for a golf tournament...I can do all of the above." It was not until the latter part of our first interview that Snickers casually mentioned she had owned her own business for a 10-year period. Her joy in her work, pride in her employees, and success in her operations was evident. She recalled, "We did about 3 million dollars a year. And uh, very successful and it was a wonderful opportunity and I was the director of business development."

Family losses, grief, and the "bad crowd." Snickers were always a family-oriented person from a close and loving family so when her uncle passed away, this came as a major surprise and devastating blow. Seemingly adding to this loss, Snickers' father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease at the same time. While she was appreciative of

the support the family received from hospice care, his subsequent death two years later was a significant loss for her as well; after all, she and her father had been “best friends.” Further tragedy struck Snickers and her family when her mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer soon thereafter. Between the accumulation of losses and her mother’s failing health, Snickers suddenly found herself needing to assume caregiving responsibilities and step away from work: “It was six months before my mom passed away that I sold my interest in the company. Because after, my mom was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, so I sold my interest in the company to move home and take care of her.”

After her mom’s death, Snickers resumed work within the restaurant industry wherein she found herself associating with a “bad crowd.” Snickers noted, “Being in the restaurant industry, you tend to be around people uh, that consume a lot of alcohol. And I wasn’t that way before, but I let my guard go down and it was just, it was non-stop.” So after being back in the workforce for around a two-year period after her mother passed, Snickers found herself associating with colleagues who drank heavily. This provided the context for a several month spiral of heavy alcohol use that eventually led to her stepping away from her job and her first episode of homelessness: “I was being very erratic and irresponsible. I was having a problem that I was feeling self-defeated for some reason, and was not hanging around with the right people and I started drinking too much and being very irresponsible.”

Although Snickers did not point to this directly, it appeared coincidental that her alcohol use started in the aftermath of all her family losses. Since her family was so close and such a defining source of strength, losing many of them in such succession really took a big toll on her. Despite her grief and recent struggles, Snickers continues to

maintain ties with her existing family members and leans on them for emotional support. Snickers was willing to allow herself to be vulnerable with me in the interview as she tearfully described how her family relationships have unfolded in recent years: “Um, we’ve become closer. You know, after Uncle Dutch passed away, and then my dad and then mom, much more closer.”

First time homelessness and learning curves. As Snickers had always lived her life according to values of fiscal responsibility, not taking her privileges for granted, and personal accountability, she came to realize she needed to seek out help and a fresh start at the shelter: “I decided I needed to wipe myself of the people that I was involved with, and get to a place where I could get my feet on the ground. So that’s why I came here the first time.” Snickers recalled with a chuckle what had allowed her to recognize the need for a change was “Um, a kick in the butt from myself. Just waking up one day and realizing, you know, that’s not who I am.”

Although able to find help at the shelter, it took a lot of humility and swallowing of pride to accept the help in light of her previous level of success. As she had grown accustomed to being well-networked, successful at her job, surrounded by people she loved, and routinely traveling and giving back to the community, it came as a bit of a shock for her to be the one in need of help. Once she got over the initial shock, Snickers began to more fully recognize what it was like to be impoverished and experienced a shift in her own perspective on those who are homeless. In contrasting her prior perspective with her current stance, she relayed,

Why don’t these people find a place to go and do something? And once you’re in this position, you realize, you know, they’re not all bad people. They’ve just been through a rough situation. And they need help. Which is why I’m very, thank God I’m here.

The transformative experience of becoming homeless and bearing witness to others' life circumstances not only helped Snickers develop greater patience and empathy for others, it also helped put her own situation into perspective:

Listening to certain stories and particular situations that people here have, I'm able to sit back and just listen to them, and just like "wow! Their situation is a 1000 times worse than what mine is and what they've been through." You know, being raped and shoved underneath a, you know, an overpass, and thrown into a river, and not seeing for, or anybody care about them for days and freezing to death with no shoes and no clothes. Um, I have a lot more patience to sit and listen to something like that, and not analyze people, and judge them because of what they have been through and are going through, but understand what they are going through and how they feel.

By drawing from various social supports, her own strengths, and the resources available at the shelter, Snickers was able to obtain employment, bounce back into an independent living environment, and keep her first episode of homelessness short-lived. Unfortunately for Snickers, her kindness and strong work ethic were ultimately taken advantage of:

After I was here the first time there was several people within the dorm that I remained close to after I left, and I was one of the first people to leave because I had a full-time job and was able to get an apartment. And um, long story short there were two individuals that called me that were about to be homeless again that didn't have a job, and I didn't want them to be homeless. So um, unfortunately with the first circumstance I got taken advantage of to an extreme.

Although normally a strength for her, Snickers' kindness, empathy, and community orientation was taken advantage of during a fragile period of trying to re-establish herself. Those she had let in wound up abusing Snickers' trust, stole from her, and tarnished her reputation with her landlord: "I felt bad for them, so I opened up my heart and my apartment to them.... I was left without rent money, without anything that I had saved for and spent a lot of money for." Worse yet, these events occurred simultaneously with a change in the business flow for the company she had been working for. As such,

Snickers and several of her colleagues found themselves laid off from the company due to circumstances beyond their control. While it would have been easy for Snickers to wallow in self-pity, resentment, or anger, she elected to view this as a learning experience to grow from: “Helping people that I thought I was helping and they took advantage of me. It’s turned my life right. It won’t ever happen again.”

The phoenix rises. Less than a year after she had left the shelter in the hopes of rebuilding her life, Snickers found herself needing the assistance of the shelter once more. Yet she would not be deterred: “I dug a hole for myself and I got in a bad place, and I decided, you know, get yourself out of it, end up here, and that’s what I did. I built myself back up!” For Snickers, this approach has been aided by supports on multiple fronts including the positive influence of the shelter itself. She opined the program is tried and true, run by phenomenal people who make a difference, and noted, “It’s a great, positive learning experience in my mind, that anybody that takes it to heart and just really wants to change their life around, there’s not a better place to be.”

Such supports have allowed Snickers to capitalize on her existing strengths, sense of self-efficacy, and optimistic attitude toward life. Reflecting on the circumstances surrounding her homelessness, Snickers relayed,

You can spend a lot of time really beating yourself up for stupid reasons, or not even a stupid reason, just you know, how I could have done this, I could have done this, I could have done that. You know, you’re living life today; you see the sun’s outside shining...there’s a lot of opportunity and within yourself. You create your future.

In light of her recent hardships, Snickers has now come to see the need for having a stronger self-focus this time around. It was a big learning curve for Snickers to realize that giving to others need not compromise herself and her goals. For Snickers, it has

helped for her to see there are positive, trained staff who are able to aid other residents:

“There’s only a certain point that I can go here. And, you know, there’s trained professionals and people that are here to do that. I’m just a resident.” Although she still tries to be a positive influence for others, her efforts are less focused on overextending herself and more on carrying herself with a constructive attitude, holding an empathic perspective, and advocating for those who are capable of helping someone in need to do so:

I guess I feel at times sad that I, I can’t just reach out and help other people that I feel aren’t where I am at the moment. And they’re still dealing with, you know, abuse from a husband or a boyfriend or whatever it may be. They’re still being self-destructive, and their mentality just isn’t very positive, and they just, they dig a hole for themselves, and I wish that there is something that I could do, and I, you know, try to always speak positive.

Snickers indicated she is always uplifted by and encouraging of those with means who help out those in need. In her photo elicitation project, she captured a few images that spoke to the humanity of those who could stand to benefit from community assistance. In the image below (see Figure 32), Snickers indicated this scene depicted a man who had been homeless but was now provided a place to stay in exchange for basic labor assistance. Such forms of action from community members instill her with hope.



Figure 32. Snickers photo 1.

Ever one to be involved in her community, Snickers has managed to draw from supports beyond the immediate environment of the shelter to help herself rise again. In particular, she spoke highly of a nearby gym (see Figure 33) and her new work environment.



Figure 33. Snickers photo 2.

In describing the gym, Snickers shared, “I like the concept of having a sober environment of, um, where people can go and feel safe and have support. Because they

do a lot of group activities.... And it's just, it's a clean, lovely, inviting place.” Perhaps due to her lifelong love of athletics, Snickers was the only participant who spoke to taking good care of her mind and body. As she stressed, “I think taking care of yourself and being conscious of your uh, your well-being because you're important. Prolong your life and have a good healthy life, you know?” Meanwhile, although not depicted here, her picture of her workplace was a point of pride for her as her belief in herself and the opportunity presented by the new job seemed to instill hope and reinvigorate her. Snickers espoused, “I see myself moving up within the company and being a major player within their company.” Her awareness of and ownership of her strengths, in addition to her ability to take on new challenges with a fresh perspective, are assets that have continued to serve Snickers well. She stressed, “Because now I have something challenging for me, and that's what I needed, to smile and say I have a huge opportunity.” For Snickers, her individual-level strengths have always interacted dynamically with familial and community-level supports. Her active connections and social supports have been invaluable to her morale and efforts to bounce back:

So that's my community and everybody is extremely supportive, you know, seeing what I'm going through, you know, I don't want their financial help, I, I just need their, I need their back.... And, you know, they're absolutely amazing, and I can pick up the phone whenever I want to chat with them, you know, they can come down and visit and we can go have a cup of coffee or take a walk, go to the park, whatever we need to do.

Cross-Narrative Analysis

While it is difficult to generalize across narratives, cross-narrative analysis (Merriam, 1998) was conducted to explore common or overlapping themes across the individual narratives. These comparisons look at “separate but similar studies ex post facto...this method highlights both the uniqueness and the commonality of participants’

experiences and allows us to understand each study more fully” (West & Oldfather, 1995, p. 454). After going through the narrative deconstructive process of “restorying” (Creswell, 2007, p. 56), transcripts and field texts were read and reread to more holistically comprehend the narratives. From there, significant statements were located within the transcripts of each participant, or intra-narrative analysis, which allowed me to begin developing clusters of meaning and form the statements into themes (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Re-storied narratives were examined and scoured for non-theoretical, attachment, and resiliency-relevant themes while maintaining relevant contextual details such as time, place, plot, and scene, and potential counter-narrative elements in mind (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Individual narrative themes were compared and contrasted as part of the cross-narrative analysis.

Based on the process of looking across narratives for moments of thematic resonance and discordance, tentative assertions from this cross-narrative analysis are presented here as they relate to the overall relevance of attachment and resiliency theory, context, and counter-narrative elements. I say tentative as Gomm et al. (1994) felt strongly the researcher should not be the one to draw generalizations or suggest transferability as there is danger in overgeneralizing conclusions from a limited number of participant narratives for both the reader and the researcher. Yet when naming the themes, I aimed to capture the common features and core experiences evident across participants’ narratives, keeping categories broad enough to allow for transferability without being so narrow as to exclude or suggest objective truth. By focusing on the concordant elements of participants’ narratives, I aimed to make them more digestible as

a whole, highlighting participants' humanity while parceling out areas of struggle and strength. Nine overarching themes were generated through cross-narrative analysis:

- Plurality of Pathways
- It is Scary to Become Homeless
- Adversity and Resilience Abound
- Individualized Coping Strategies
- Catch-22 of Individual-Level Protective Factors
- Importance of Positive Attachment Ties
- Secure Versus Insecure: Which is More Adaptive?
- Importance of Community Response
- Context: Tangible and Relational Resources

A summary of the primary precursive and sustaining factors contributing to participants' homelessness was presented in Table 3 in the Introduction section. While not exhaustive nor able to capture more systemic and structural barriers, such factors are reviewed in the cross-narrative analysis section. Table 4 provided a closer analysis of the primary adverse childhood experiences reported by each participant. Again, this table was not exhaustive as it focused predominantly on adverse relational experiences in childhood and did not account for the impact of such factors as chronic poverty or instability of living arrangements. Meanwhile, Table 5 expounded upon the various types of relational disruptions reported. Of note was the prevalence of relational disruptions preceding many participants' pathways into homelessness as well as the relative dearth of current attachment ties. While current attachment ties and patchwork social networks existed for some participants, most were limited in scope, rebuilding, or entirely absent.

Plurality of Pathways

When inquiring into participants' perspectives on how they believed they had become homeless, currently and with previous episodes (where relevant), it quickly became evident no single or simple understanding was sufficient. Indeed, it became apparent there was a plurality of pathways into homelessness that had been traversed by participants, with both individual and systemic-level influences impacting them. For most participants, it was an intersection of multiple factors over the life course that contributed to their pathway into homelessness. Also, while many endorsed precursive and sustaining factors were commonly found in the literature, this was not universally true. While more acute stressors directly contributed to some participants' homelessness, most narratives suggested an accumulation of risk factors had contributed to pathways into homelessness. Yet in order to illustrate this accumulation effect, an abbreviated version of Kay's pathway narrative is provided below. The reader is encouraged to refer back to the within-narrative analysis for a greater explication around participants' pathways into homelessness in addition to looking across the columns of Table 3.

Kay spoke to the damaging influence of her parents' substance use and highly abusive behavior, particularly as it related to the impact on her connection to the outside world. As she said, "I had nooooo connection to normal. Didn't spend the night with friends, weren't allowed to do that. Probably because you would have figured it out sooner." Having compensated for these dynamics by being a high-achiever, Kay relayed she still felt fairly poorly about herself on account of her experiences at home and the bullying she experienced from peers: "I musta been hideous. That's all I know. Ugly duckling. Tiny, scrawny, buck teeth, reddish hair, freckles, or teeth-missing freckles, you

know, just ugly.” While Kay had some relational buffers along the way, she found her adult life was largely marked by work and a series of relational “train wrecks” that eventually led to her closing off everyone else including her daughter. Increasingly isolated and without supports, Kay found herself struck between a rock and a hard place when the bottom fell out of the mortgage business. Suspecting that some of her present difficulties in employment related to age discrimination, Kay relayed, “So it’s like, if you don’t have a following, you know, if you don’t walk in the door making them money, it’s like I’m a dinosaur.” Challenging her transition to homelessness was challenging. Kay acknowledged that much of this shift was due to factors outside of her control: “It’s not like I was spending the rent money on laying up in the streets somewhere. But I just simply lost my job and they kept our commissions, and that’s it! You know? I know I’m not alone.”

Many participants were able to name some structural barriers that influenced their circumstances, which appeared to have helped them have a more balanced sense of accountability regarding their present homelessness. Some of the various structural barriers named included experiences of discrimination and differential treatment based on homelessness or other indicators of poverty; chronic instability and poverty in childhood; impact of natural disasters; lack of available affordable housing; educational barriers; inequity in the justice system; adverse impact on one’s credit; intersections between insurance status and quality of health care; lack of adequate mental health services in the area; difficulty finding employment due to instability of work history, poor credit, or felony status; limited awareness of or advertisement for resources; difficulty navigating

resources; barriers of transportation and access; and opportunity costs with time.

DeBroncos captured many of these concerns :

They gave me an extension until tomorrow, but I had to have employment, and it's like, oh, I haven't heard anything from Aramark, I haven't heard anything from Walgreen's, Goodwill said they would hire but they need, give them 30 days. So it's like, "Ugh, you guys are not helping me out." I need someone to say, "Here, thank you, you got the job." But they don't do that anymore. Now they need to do the background check, they gotta do the "Oh, oh, your credit, your credit report, can't hire you." And I think that's basically what it is, my credit report has, "Ehh, he's not a good employee because of his credit." And if that's what it is, it's like, how am I.... How do I improve it if I can't get work? If I can't get work how am I going to improve my credit history. It's like, "Give me a job, and let me show you what I can do, aaaand, maybe I can fix my credit." But it doesn't seem like they want to, so, what does that do? It puts me out and it makes me homeless.

It is Scary to Become Homeless

Regardless of how they got there, one thing was fairly clear for a number of participants: it is scary to become homeless. Whether it was their sense of shock, disillusionment, betrayal, frantic efforts to find and navigate resources, the impact on their sense of self, or the need to negotiate between short- and long-term priorities, many were challenged in their efforts to cope with homelessness. Recalling how terrified she had been at the prospect of winding up on the street, Kay said,

I don't know how you look for jobs and be presentable living on the street. I don't know how you survive out there or eat out of a trashcan and keep your health. I don't know how you beg and steal from people to survive, or stand on the highway with a sign. I don't know. I don't want to know. Heh. I don't want to know because thank God there's choices.

Christina was a little more indignant, criticizing those who failed to empathize with the inherent difficulties of being homeless: "Go out there with only the clothes that they have on their back, no support from any of their family, they can't ask their family for nothing, and then send them out there to spend a week out there."

Vernon in particular noted that between his divorce process, sudden loss of support from his community, and gradual financial spiral amidst mental and physical health concerns, it had been quite the challenge to try to keep things together. He recalled,

So those three things really, the um, the divorce, and then you know having to sell everything, and, and um, and then um, you know the church not having, having a support network or not being able to talk to people because they had misconceptions or, and they, they took sides or whatever, and, and um, that really is, is really, well, they're all devastating.

While resources were available in his new community, they stood in sharp contrast to the standard of care he had previously grown accustomed to. Vernon lamented the costs incurred to his time, energy, and sense of security from the exposure to at-times harmful services. Particularly challenging was feeling let down by those he used to rely on, like his brother: "I needed a loving place where people believed in me because I kept getting bashed by people at the church. And so I needed somebody that knew my talents, and he's the one. So I felt let down."

The navigation of resources was not always an intuitive or easy process. Kay said, "It's a shame it's just not all streamlined." Scooter's experience showed this could be particularly challenging when finding oneself unexpectedly homeless in a new community. Kay and Spencer demonstrated how not everyone is even aware such transitional shelter services exist: "It's just sad that people do not know. There's surely other people out there like me who maybe just lost their job and their apartment, and not just looking for a free hand-out. Both Vernon and Scooter were frustrated by how government programs were really difficult to navigate, full of dead ends, hard to qualify

for as White males, and often staffed by prejudiced individuals. He was irritated by the fact these dynamics added another barrier he had to work that much harder to overcome.

Wanting to hold themselves accountable without interjecting all of the blame, participants adopted different strategies to rise to the challenge of their present circumstances. Some participants looked more toward recognizing the role of external forces in their lives. Christina said,

Homeless doesn't mean dirty, you know? Just because I'm homeless and I'm sleeping outside, doesn't mean that I'm a dirty person or that I want to be out there.... That's part of why you're out there, you know? Whether you realize it or not, you know, the way you've grown up and things that have happened to your life is, it's a tribute to, plays a tribute to where you are in your life.

While B.P. acknowledged that struggles with substance use was a contributing factor to prior episodes of homelessness, he found himself looking more systemically now in light of his ongoing sobriety: "I think it's external things, you know? I've got a lot of people that hate me, I've got haters all around me!" Meanwhile, others tried to look more at the role they played in their present circumstances. Consistent with his mantra of "if you hang out with knuckleheads then you're going to be a knucklehead," Scooter took accountability for times when he acted out of anger, ignorance, or put himself in a bad situation: "I try to get out of it as soon as possible, so that way I don't get stuck in that type of environment, community, and everything." Although she also named some of the contextual and systemic factors that impacted her homelessness, Kay owned the ways in which she could have mitigated her transition to homelessness:

Instead of, "Gee, how'd I get here again?" I know I didn't save money, I know I didn't listen to when I was clearly being told about that job, um, the market, where the market was heading. I was just like, blinders, "Oh, not me, not me, not me. I've been doing this for 20 plus years! Not me. That will never happen to me. I won't be out of my career field. Not me."

Another common refrain here related to the hesitancy, indecision, and difficulty caused by weighing short-term needs with longer-term gains. Blue appreciated the shelter just for this very reason as it gave her an opportunity to consider longer-term success over short-term patches: “I’m very thankful for this place because it’s allowing me a little time to figure out what to do next.” She added her concerns around how

I can go back to flagging, which is what I was doing before the flood. But I’m being stubborn about that. And I would like, I’d like, I’m just lost right now. Like I said, I don’t know what I’d be good at. I’d like to find something where I can actually make a living instead of struggle.

Others were more concerned with winding up feeling trapped, running out of options, or ending up in worse circumstances. Black was worried he and his wife might wind up burning through all of their options, especially if they continued on the path they had been on: “I’m worried we can’t go back to none of those places just because of our past because of stuff like that.... So we’re running out of options.” Scooter reflected on how unexpected job losses had often forced him to choose between affordable rent and exposure to negative environmental influences: “Just had a tendency when my luck was getting down, you know losing a job or something like that, I would have to revert back to the bad neighborhoods where rent was cheaper.” He also discussed how short-term work options, such as through day labor, run the risk of injury without compensation: “It ain’t like I can sue them or get workman’s comp to pay for while I’m injured, or anything else.” Vernon was also fairly political on how he considered homelessness and government programs, like disability, to be a trap: “And that was one of the, biggest worries having state-run help, is because I didn’t want to have that on the books.”

In addition to the emotional turmoil and difficult decisions participants often had to contend with, several referred to the opportunity cost incurred through lost time and

the additional costs of poverty. Having never ridden the city bus before, Kay quickly became aware of what had previously been an unrecognized “privilege of time” having a vehicle had granted her in the past. Blue echoed this sentiment: “A vehicle means a little more freedom. And, I’ve managed to keep a vehicle in my life whenever possible. Most of the time I have running wheels, because without them your, it makes life hard.”

Scooter discussed how transportation-related difficulties made the job searching process all the more frustrating when he had been lured to sites to interview under the false pretense a job was actually available. Meanwhile, Vernon’s honesty and desire to behave in ethical, legal manners made it complicated for him at times. He recalled how “I wasn’t going to drive my truck because I thought the insurance had expired on it. I wasn’t going to illegally do that. Which, you know, most people that wouldn’t bother ‘em, but it bothers me!” B.P. also spoke to the difficulty of finding affordable places to live, trustworthy roommates, and how various policies and security needs often robbed him of time:

Have to use so much time to make sure things of value are put up and safe. Time that maybe I could be out working or time I could be taking care of my body, or learning, reading and learning, so much wasted time being in a shelter. And then on top of that, the shelter has so many conditions for you to be able to continue to stay there. So they want you, they say that they want you to find your own housing. They say their goal is for you to get your own place and become independent. Yet they put so many restrictions and requirements on you and things they want you to do, that it takes up multiple hours of the day where you’re unable to create a new life for yourself because you’ve got this obligation that if you don’t fulfill these hours and these commitments to the shelter you could be asked to leave the shelter, and then you’re just out on the streets.

Adversity and Resilience Abound

Many participants’ narratives were littered with potentially traumatic experiences they have had to endure and overcome. For some, the process of bouncing back has

taken longer than others; yet, regardless, all continued to persevere. With the aid of transitional homeless shelters, many were actively working to re-establish themselves while remaining aware of the fact their margin for error was small.

As can be seen in Table 3 and was conveyed in many individual narratives, relevant participants' mental health concerns and (historical) substance use concerns could be empathized with on the basis of prior traumatic experiences, relational disruptions, and general adverse circumstances. For instance, both Scooter and Christina spoke to substance use concerns that became exaggerated following the unexpected death of caregivers. Others, such as B.P., Jade, and Spencer, described how they had early exposure to parental substance abuse, mixed feelings toward themselves, and turned to substances as a way to both cope and try to rebel against their circumstances. Spencer also spoke to how he might have been impacted by pre-natal substance use exposure, having had "Irish anger" modeled to him by his father, and having been relegated to the "black sheep" position in his family. A particular point of emphasis for Blue was the multiple influences the deprivation of financial autonomy had on her: "You lose a lot of control when you don't have an income."

Despite the myriad setbacks participants had endured, most had pursued at least some higher education; were generally intelligent, resourceful, and hardworking; and several had been home owners, caretakers, parents, and/or had successful careers. Indeed, many of the participants showed ways in which they might be considered simultaneously vulnerable and not. For instance, Blue viewed herself as smart but also felt she had been oppressed: "They don't have to work like I did and not even be able to eat at the end of the day almost.... I don't even know how I made it some of the years. I

did!” Scooter really took pride in both his intelligence and his ability to find ways to maintain employment as a hard worker. James also displayed a strong work ethic and had a general belief in himself since he had accomplished much over the years: “I can do everything but a couple of things, you know? I can sew, I can iron, I can, I’ve sold cars.... I was top salesman for a while. I like long hours, I can work forever.”

Meanwhile, Cancerman, with his long-time truck-driving career, would rather work than collect disability, especially since he viewed it as insufficient: “The government don’t pay enough to, I’m not gonna bother around with disability, because I make a lot more working when I do.”

Most participants were very thankful for what the shelter and shelter staff afforded them. Many displayed resilience in their ability to acknowledge the need for help, perseverance to get into the shelters in light of lottery systems and waitlists, and fortitude as they worked through the shelters’ levels programs. Several participants commented on the benefits they derived from having a sober living environment; Jade sought out the shelter over other options specifically because of this feature: “I just, I have no tolerance for that any more. So this place is good for me because I don’t have to deal with chaos.” A lot of gratitude was expressed for how this resource helped participants meet basic needs and work toward improving their circumstances. As Kay said, “All the help ... because I don’t have gas in my car, bus tokens for job interview, food on the table, and clean bed, and clean shower, and you’re safe here.... Follow the rules and life is good.” DeBroncos said the shelter gave him stability, a sense of home, hope, and the ability to envision a path to success.

Sharing her appreciation for how the positivity, well-rounded and holistic programming, and support from staff reinforced residents' self-efficacy, Snickers indicated, "This is tried and true, and as I said, there are people that want to take the program and build and build upon their success.... It's like why wouldn't you want to do that?" Similarly, Christina shared how "these people here, they're not here to push you, you need to do this yourself. They're giving you the tools, you gotta pick them up, and take them, and run with them" while Spencer noted how "it's kind of nice, like not having someone tell me what to do, but having someone help, you know, guide me along on the path that I need to go." Several participants found it important to comment on the overall demeanor of the staff as well. As Kay relayed, "These people are so merciful and non-judgmental." Further, James indicated he benefitted at the shelter in part because "I'm an asset, I feel like I'm an asset here instead of a burden." At the same time, some participants, like B.P. and Spencer, described having mixed experiences with the shelter structure. As Spencer said, "o it's helping me move forward, but on some of the stuff that I want to do as far as like, you know, still having fun and going out and mingling with society and still being sober and doing positive things, it's kind of holding me back.'

Many participants were actively working hard to get or stay employed and maintain sobriety (or never struggled with substance use in the first place). Vernon had been diligently applying to many prospective jobs and had been actively trying to reassert himself. Reflecting on his hopes for himself, he shared,

I want to get back into, you know, being fully productive, being a project manager, being an information technology troubleshooting, or being a leader in those because I'm, I've done all those things, I've built businesses, I've gotten new business from existing clients.... I've trained people, I've done all these different things and I want to do that again. And um, and so that's, that's a big hope and dream that I need to do.

James, Scooter, and Spencer all reported relying on their work ethic to stay employed and faith-based supports to help maintain sobriety. Scooter described how he was really working hard to stay motivated and do the right things the right way: “I got a real hard work ethic. I mean every one of my employers can say that much. When I go there, I work continuously, I get the job done, whatever they ask me to do.” Several participants were working to avoid negative influences and/or engage in their treatment to stay “clean and sober,” as Spencer put it.

Having survived a multitude of traumas and setbacks across their lifespans, it came as no surprise that it sometimes took participants a bit longer to bounce back. Yet at the same time, some of these experiences appeared to have been quite transformative for a handful of participants. For instance, following his paralysis, B.P. noted he was no longer afraid of death, felt better about himself as a person in many ways, and had come to reprioritize his values. Spencer, having bounced back from so many injuries, relayed he had a sense of being able to overcome his present circumstances and future challenges. Meanwhile, Jade expressed how she had been forged into a more positive, strong-minded woman as a result of how her various trials had shaped her. Kay relayed how she had come to appreciate how revelatory and growth-producing her experience of homelessness had been:

I didn't know I was shallow, I was shallow. Um, I didn't know I was judgmental, I was judgmental. Uh, I didn't know full blast of humility, I know humility. I know how to ask for help now. Uh, I think, I just think is making lemonade out of lemons and a soft place to land. I can't say that enough. So, and my goal is to come back, I don't care what it is, you know, whatever, what, if it's standing out helping people get phones, whatever it is I will be a volunteer, I will give back.

Having found newfound strength from surviving homelessness, abusive relationships, and other difficulties throughout her life, Blue spoke to how self-preservation was big for

her and how she had benefitted from coming to view herself as a survivor.: “When uh, I finally learned what victim meant and I finally learned to stop being one, because you’re only a victim if you allow yourself to be. And I finally found that out.” Blue now found herself balancing out her painful experiences with humor, a yin and yang philosophy toward life, engaging in some repression, and trying focus on the positive aspects of life.

Despite having bounced back and grown in the face of adversity, several participants voiced their awareness around how they were persevering on a narrow path. Spencer noted how it could be challenging to be cognizant of how he was walking on a very narrow line: “Kinda hard, you know, to find like the ultra medium and all that.” Very focused on choices, not tolerant of negative influences, and better empowered to choose what aligned with her purpose and values (i.e., family, spirituality, service/giving back), Jade found that what she learned from her prior tribulations had served her well: “So going to the dark and then coming to the light, it’s just like, all those choices or whatever, it’s in my hands, it’s my choice where I go, who I’m around, my life is my choice.” Viewing himself as a fighter, survivor, and hard worker, Cancerman found he could keep urging himself on: “It’s just how I got, uh, it’s the same thing I’ve done pretty much my whole life. I mean, I’m a fighter. I won’t give up.... A lot of people just, they just give up. I don’t.” With sobriety, James noted his prior strengths related to determination have returned and now help him hold himself accountable. The concept of learning to better hold himself accountable was reflected throughout James’ photo-elicitation project.

Individualized Coping Strategies

Much like their pathways into homelessness, the manner in which participants coped with their present circumstances and the various hardships they had come across in life were diverse. For some, the ability to respond with resilience to their current homelessness had been enhanced by developing or getting back in touch with individualized coping strategies. Spirituality, in all of its various forms, was a source of coping mentioned by nearly all participants. Vernon, Jade, and DeBroncos found their spirituality helped them have a sense of purpose, made them believe they could handle what was presented to them, and typically provided a source of community or connection. Having discovered his Jewish background a bit later in life, B.P. took pride and enjoyment from his capacity to learn and think critically about his faith, also noting he found it helped to trust that God watched over him and had helped him survive through all the toils of his life. For some, like Kay, their spirituality was quite literally protective. Kay found it helped to know that she was always loved even when this was lacked elsewhere, as she relayed, “I’ve always felt spiritual.... I think that’s what’s kept me from jumping off a bridge, literally. Because this is not yet. I’ve always known that this is not yet. And um, it’s just how you get through it.” James described how his faith helped ground him when positive, like-minded peers surrounded him at his congregation: “Oh, it’s all believing in the Lord, believing in God. And having the, the people I can relate to around me.”

Most participants described different ways in which they embodied facets of positive thinking, be it through the cultivation of optimistic outlooks, their attitudes of gratitude, or ability to provide a helpful reframe. Snickers would routinely express her

appreciation to the staff; she was also proud of how she had learned to view situations from multiple angles on account of her multi-cultural upbringing. For instance, Snickers relayed,

Instead of looking at something and saying, “Oh that, my God the sun isn’t shining today.” Saying, “You know, it’s just a little bit of cloud cover, you know, perhaps we do need a little bit of rain to help the flowers flourish tomorrow.” And, so, you know, think of something positive because it not only reflects within yourself internally, but it also, it helps people as well that are perhaps in a depressed mood, or, you know, are always in this negative attitude.

Others like Jade, Scooter, and Blue had several positive reframes and philosophies that allowed them to adaptively influence their mood. For Spencer, sobriety has meant a world of difference: “I never really had that positive glance, you know on a bad day or something like that, before I quit drinking.” Several also discussed how they were intentional in trying to be a good influence for others while working to distance themselves from those who were more negative. B.P. relayed how he used to be more pessimistic but found that now “I really enjoy being around positive people, people who are happy. Not people who are griping about what happened yesterday, or a month ago, or a year ago.... Let’s start focusing on a way to make things better.”

The level of gratitude expressed by many participants was quite high. Jade contrasted herself to others at the shelter who appeared to take it for granted: “People shouldn’t gripe because guess what, this is a place that is, you know, so freely given.... So, I mean the gratitude I have for this place is amazing.” Meanwhile, Kay and Black almost seemed surprised to realize what they were grateful for. As Black said,

It is rough out there too, and I do see some of these guys here looking every day and they don’t find jobs as easy. So that’s another thing, I, it makes me feel very fortunate that I did find a job so quick, and I usually do. Like, I don’t know what it is, but it just makes me feel I got a realize how good I got it. Some guys can’t find jobs.

Kay had managed to step outside of her immediate circumstances to reflect on what she could be grateful for in a relative sense. She described,

I'm not sitting in the middle of a scorching sun watching on a thin mat with no shade, watching my child starve to death swarmed by flies. How privileged I am! Heh. How privileged! Just to have born where I'm born with the shitty parents I had, I'm still so privileged!

Kay added,

Just like, at four in the morning you can go and get a steaming hot cup of coffee with cream and sugar, and walk out on the deck out there and see the world go by, and you're above it and you're safe. And tomorrow has promise. And I don't know if I could capture that without a lot of happy faces, which you can't show. But when you look at people's eyes that appreciate being here, that, that tells the story. I don't know if a building could tell it.

Perhaps as an extension of their gratitude and spirituality for some, most every participant spoke to various ways in which they wanted to be able to give back to others. Discussing his desire to someday engage in motivational speaking, Spencer shared, "I'd hope they could learn from my mistake instead of having to go down that same rough path, because it's a pretty bumpy road." At the same time, some spoke to how it had been helpful to learn not to overextend themselves in this regard. Snickers spoke to how she has such compassion, a desire to help, and is trying to be a positive influence for those around her but found "I wish I can do more but right now I need to concentrate on me." Both James and Scooter also described how they had come to recognize how to more adaptively attend to their own needs first at times. As Scooter relayed,

My faith really became a lot stronger, and it's to where I don't have to show off in front of people. You know, and try to get the attention from everybody around no more. I came to realize that I just need to pretty much focus on myself. Because like, I told you about wanting to give back to the community, I mean I can't help nobody else if I can't help myself first. So I gotta make myself the priority. You know I can't worry about what people think about me, or how they treat me. I've just gotta keep going with what I know I need to do.

Others, such as Blue, still struggle to strike a balance in this area: “Unfortunately it’s my plight in life to help people. I end up helping people to my detriment more often than not.... Which is hard considering I don’t make much income.”

Several participants spoke to how they managed to maintain more of a present focus while still setting realistic goals and drawing from prior talents and accomplishments as a source of self-efficacy. DeBroncos said, “My ability to journal everything that, after my mom’s death, and through the last six, seven months, I was able to keep myself focused.” Christina, B.P., and Black were especially keen on their need to take things one step at a time, giving themselves credit along the way. Most kept their goals relatively small and attainable such as how Scooter shared, “I would just like to be able to afford to be alive. To be able to be comfortable.” Meanwhile, Jade also captured this refrain as she explained, “Goals is to stay sober to get to my kids, to get to my life. I just want a simple life. Period.” She also found her appreciation for nature helped her maintain a calm, present-centered focus:

Nature’s everywhere, just like the, even out here in the shelter, it really is, you know, it’s on the outside of the town, so it’s really kind of pretty, and it’s calm, and it’s peaceful.... no matter where you’re at, it’s definitely a perception, a mindset that you have to, you know, look up.

A little over half of the participants spoke directly to how they might draw from prior accomplishment, hobbies, and talents as a means of both motivating them and imbuing them with confidence. Dating back to his wrestling days, James shared, “I don’t know because I don’t give up. I don’t take no for an answer too often, if I get a no from you I’ll find another way to get it.” Cancerman added, “I felt great about myself.... Always been

a doer.... Not one to just sit around and do nothing. I pretty much accomplished what I want to accomplish. I set my sights on something, I can do it.”

Just over half of the participants talked about how they derived a sense of purpose, motivation, and enhancement from viewing their circumstances and past “mistakes” as both meaningful and as learning experiences. After he was paralyzed, B.P. found he was actually really glad to have a second chance to try to be a better person. Jade shared her perspective on how she felt: “There’s been maybe mistakes and I have maybe some regrets, but really truly I’ve learned so much from all my mistakes that you know, it’s definitely purposeful.” As devastated as Vernon had been by his recent losses and present homelessness, he has maintained a positive outlook by reflecting on ways his experiences were beneficial to himself or others: “Everything happens for a reason. I know God has a plan for us and certain things happen so we can learn certain things.... I’ve had so many tremendously good things happen here. I saved a guy’s life!” Kay echoed this sentiment, noting,

You’re exposed to something that life has not taught me to prepare for. You know? It’s just, I’m sure I’m not going to walk out of this the same person. Wouldn’t want to actually. Wouldn’t, wouldn’t, took a lot of heartache, a lot of pain, a lot of tears, but and, a lot of hurt, pain, pain! But still, if it weren’t for such wonderful people, you might as well just dig a hole and jump in it. Because you can’t survive out there, I couldn’t.

Blue was particularly big on the philosophy of appreciating things as learning experiences to which to have grown: “I’ve learned now is that it’s not so detrimental, it’s all experience. Life is experience and it’s just another experience that I have to go through. Because we learn from experiences.... It’s not necessarily devastating that I’m homeless.” She added, “Whether good or bad, it’s an experience. And I, you know, if you look, sometimes the good is hard to find, but it’s there.”

A final unique coping strategy that emerged fairly consistently, although not spoken to directly per se, revolved around how participants compared and contrasted themselves to others who were homeless. This strategy appeared to have allowed participants to give themselves credit for their progress and maintain their motivation moving forward. Reflecting on her own path of recovering from giving up and feeling dead inside, Blue said she saw herself as both similar and different from those who are in such a state: “I call it the walk of the living dead, because they’ve died inside. They’ve given up. That’s all it is.” Participants were particularly critical and at times resentful of those whom they perceived to be as negative, ungrateful, or unwilling to accept the help available to them, especially when they felt it contributed to furthering stereotypes or impacting the opinions of legislators. As Christina lamented, “Then more policy comes, you know? Because these people did this stuff, now there’s more policy, which is red tape that can’t be cut through because of people that have abused the situation.”

Scooter talked about how his hard work contrasted with many others who were homeless:

There’s a lot of people that don’t want to do nothing. They’d rather go ahead and get, panhandle for money so they can go to the liquor store. There’s some that can panhandle to go buy drugs, or weed, or something like that. That’s the lifestyle that they’ve chose, they don’t, they don’t want to get out of where they’re at. They’re content with where they are. You know? But the people that are actually striving, there is a lot of support ... that can actually help you.

Black, who appeared to still struggle with a lot of feelings of shame, both likened and distanced himself from those who were homeless.

I see other guys out there that don’t care and are homeless, homeless-homeless, like.... Just sitting out at the library all day dirty and just not caring. So I think if I wouldn’t have my wife or this place, I’d, probably would be in the same place.

Whereas there were some like Snickers who saw themselves as a possible role model for others:

I finally have a challenge in front of me that I know that I can beat and exceed. And, um, along the way, how people that have been in my situation and don't need to be, and, you know, not trying to intervene with their situation but be able to not come to them and be demeaning, per se. But being a good, positive influence, you know? I can do that too!

Catch-22 of Individual-Level Protective Factors

While many participants found individualized ways to cope with traumatic experiences and a history of relational disruptions, several had run into drawbacks of overly relying on themselves. Such a survivor mentality had adaptive elements, particularly when they had been in more extreme environments, yet posed drawbacks when trying to negotiate their way out of homelessness. Several participants noted the learning curve for learning to reach out, access, and appropriately utilize supports was steep. Yet it was important to consider the context in which these participants might have developed such ways of being in the world.

For instance, James described how the early childhood trauma of his mother's death was a huge attachment and emotional injury that influenced his approach with closeness in all sorts of relationships:

I was I don't know, three or four, I saw my mother dead in a ditch.... And I think subconsciously that's led me into relationships that I don't go too deep and to, with women, because I think they may leave me. And so I'd rather be the one, I leave them.... So in, kind of security, I just, um, leave. I, I've done the same thing with my own family. Which is I know not good, but I'm in a process of healing that.

During his time in prison and when affiliated with substance abuse "fake friends," James' avoidant self-reliance was seemingly adaptive. He noted how he has felt institutionalized

and has been having to re-acclimate himself to be more open to the support of others and his family. In light of the myriad forms of rejection B.P. had experienced across all sorts of relationships, he found it was often safer to push others away or withdraw at signs of disrespect: “It made me realize what capacity for wickedness, badness, people have, and I genuinely tend to expect the worst because, so that way it won’t be such a surprise.... I won’t be hurt so much.” While protective, B.P. has come to realize such tendencies also have kept him at a distance:

Now I’ve got a hard time just, trusting guys even, like, what are they really want, what do they truly want.... So I’m not really wanting to get real close to people. If I get, if I start getting too close I’ll do something to, to, so I can pull it apart, or so they’ll get mad at me.

In the context of her abusive household, Kay found, “Other than through all of that me so eager to please and trying to win their approval. It forced me to excel.... Their, their crap made me better. In a sick way.” She commented on how this resulted in a catch-22 of self-sufficiency and stubbornness that ultimately closed her off to others:

Everything, everything! It, it’s meanness, it’s stubbornness. You won’t get me. You’re not gonna get me. You’re not going to destroy me. You don’t beat me down, I’ve had parents, you know, working on that through my whole childhood. Mm-mm, not going to get me, I’ll show you! So, yeah. It’s a two-edged sword. Gets you through it and then puts you there. Puts you there and then gets you through it.

Similarly, Spencer discussed how he has been trying to figure out how to balance cautious trust with his tendency to walk around as a “tough guy” that he developed in the context of his relationship with his father and with bullies at school. While less helpful with his newfound sobriety and attempts to connect with more positive peers, it has often served well to be prepared for conflict:

Because you can talk nice but a lot of, depending on the community, but most communities will take your kindness for weakness.... They’ll try to be nice with

you back and then they'll just take, and take, and take, and take, and then you, you know, try to get something back out of it and then ffffwww, they're gone.... So you gotta kinda walk around with a smile on your face but you've gotta have your chest puffed out at the same time, you know? Plan for the worst, hope for the best kind of thing.

Simultaneously appreciative and resentful of these tendencies, a handful of participants spoke to their growing awareness around how they needed to swallow their pride, work through feelings of shame, and overcome their trust-related difficulties. Although proud of his self-sufficiency, Scooter discussed, "I think I put myself down too much." He noted he has been trying to recognize how other supports could be helpful and that it should not entirely be on him to work through his present circumstances. While B.P. has struggled with feelings of anger and bitterness, he relayed he had been working on being more positive and learning to draw more from communal supports. But it was still a challenge for him: "I've been hurt by women, hurt by men, you know, and so it really makes it hard to just relax and to put down my guard." Kay actually expressed she came to such a revelation by participating in the research process, noting,

This was enlightening to me, because I can't, I can't talk about it without all the tears. That tells me it's still raw. It's still fresh. I can't talk about my childhood. It's, I haven't healed. When I think I have because of all these walls, you know, tsh, you're over there so you can't hurt me. But they are still hurting me. So this is enlightening for me, to go, "Damn, you're still in a puddle of tears like you're five years old." You know? It's still that fresh!

Secure Versus Insecure: Which is More Adaptive?

Although the rigid over-application of certain individual-level coping strategies was not helpful for many participants, it is important to consider the contexts and ways in which it still served some individuals. At the same time, while more secure patterns of

relating were generally thought to be advantageous, some have found the need to negotiate their approach to relationships in light of their present circumstances.

Snickers seemed to be the only participant who consistently appeared to have held a more secure attachment style, while others such as Vernon reported greater security at certain points in time and within certain relationships. Both Snickers and Vernon appeared to have been highly effective at making use of relational supports at various points in their life. In light of having more positive relational connections lately, Vernon's sudden experience of betrayal and spiral into homelessness might have felt like that much more of a loss and shock to him, making it that much harder for him to trust others:

I had to pull back and so I didn't have my dad to go to, I didn't have the church to go to or my, even my closest friend, my best friend died. And so I feel like I'm kind of by myself here! And I don't have any, I've got some good, really good friends here, and very few I trust. I mean, I mean people that really trust, and even the one I trust the most I can't trust all the way.

While their history with more positive communities and connections might have contributed to a better self-efficacy, sense of self, and ability to connect, both Snickers and Vernon also tended to focus more on others' needs at first and were finding themselves getting taken advantage of. As Vernon recalled, "I give up too much stuff to people and help them out too much, and then I get used ... it's like I have to pull it in. And so then I get, I don't, and I'm cold to people." Snickers also struggled with this balance, needing to not foreclose on her highly caring, kind-hearted nature while still finding ways to put herself first in light of her present circumstances.

Meanwhile, as already alluded to in the previous theme, those with more insecure patterns of attachment appeared to have coped well considering their more extreme

relational and environmental circumstances. While most were effective with recognizing the need to work to get their own needs met, a growth edge revolved around their ability to access and trust the support of others. Christina felt she should only have to prove herself to herself. This attitude appeared to have been adaptive for avoiding feeling overwhelmed by others' judgments but also led to pushing others away too quickly. Indeed, Christina indicated she was often isolated: "Because I don't feel like I should have to prove myself to anybody. If I have to prove myself, I have to prove myself to me." Jade discussed how her relational experiences have her somewhat cautious and protective of herself. For Jade, her low levels of trust and desire to connect might be somewhat adaptive in light of her present circumstances. As she described herself, "I can be nice and be friends with people, but really like I just don't have tol-, I really don't have any tolerance for new friends.... Most people are selfish, and people are scandalous, and people steal." While helpful for setting boundaries with harmful others, such generalized avoidance of others might relate to why Jade could not find any prosocial peers to connect with. She added, "I don't like bank on friends. Like, I, that are, I mean, people are important but they go and they come out of your life." Blue captured this dilemma well: "Everybody needs somebody. I unfortunately don't ask too often, but uh, it's nice to have somebody. Um, I, me, I don't know if it's, I think it's because of my childhood, I'm a loner and I don't ask for help and I've never felt like I fit in."

Importance of Positive Attachment Ties

Some participants were privileged with having numerous supportive attachment ties across their lifetime; this was certainly not the case for everyone. Yet despite the

prominence of harmful relational experiences and relational disruptions for most participants, all were able to identify the presence of positive attachment ties somewhere along the way. As participants reflected on the importance of such ties, it became apparent even a short-lived positive connection could have a meaningful and lasting impact. Some of these relational protective factors appeared to have helped promote a sense of hope, a positive sense of self and self-worth, as well as greater self-efficacy. Many of these positive ties helped serve as a buffer in what was for many participants a world marked by harmful, damaging, and inconsistent relationships. Kay spoke to how her grandmother, a teacher, and a childhood piano instructor were like therapists since they would listen and value her. She said, “Because every time I get to talk, it’s healing.” Somewhat in the minority, Cancerman was very big on his parents, noting he had a positive relationship with them that continued well into adulthood; like Snickers, he gained a lot of self-efficacy and belief in himself, which too could have made it hard to lose them. Describing this dynamic, Snickers relayed,

Having great people that you trust and things that you enjoy is something that you build on forever. Instead of having a negativity or something, you know, fortunately because of my parents I was able to get a very keen sense of if there’s something you don’t feel comfortable with, then don’t get involved with it. And so instead of doing something bad, you continue to be and build yourself on something good.

Vernon described having had many successful relationships for a while, all of which brought him much meaning, a more secure attachment, a belief in himself, and a desire to give back to others. When going through the difficulties associated with his divorce and betrayal from his church, he pointed to how it was very helpful to have had his supervisor believe in him and remember his talents and capabilities: “There’s many things to where he’s supported me in my situation. And, you know, he knew me

intimately, and so, he was, he has really made a significant impact on me as well.” Black discussed how he benefitted from having a Big Brother and some other positive ties along the way. He noted,

I’ve never really had any bad relationships that I can think of. But they’ve meant a lot to me though, I’ve had a lot of friends too. That it means a lot to have somebody that you can trust.... I feel like I’ve never really had anybody that I’ve let in that close betray me.... To where it was like devastating.... So everyone I’ve let in, I feel like it has meant a lot, because it’s obviously, I let them in close enough for it to mean something.

Both Black and Jade were particularly appreciative of how they had family members who never gave up on them. Jade expressed her gratitude here by stating, “You know, and they’ve, haven’t ever gave up on me in my life when all I have went through all this stuff, and they’re still there.” Meanwhile, some participants like B.P. and Spencer noted how it was helpful to develop positive ties at some point along the way. Noting the positive shifts that had taken place for him since coming to the shelter, Spencer relayed,

Now that I’m surrounding myself with positive people in my life, you know, a lot of positive things have been happening for me, you know, like I got into this shelter, I got a job, and I only got like two months left on my parole and I haven’t violated anything.

While many social ties were invaluable to the participants here, many also had to contend with some double-edged relationships and periods of isolation. Whether it was Christina and her “street family,” Scooter and his temporary gang involvement, Snickers and the “bad crowd” of alcohol abusing co-workers, James and the “dark world” of substance using peers, or DeBroncos and his almost fiancé, most had to contend with the difficulties of such ties and seek greater distance for themselves. Blue discussed how a Wrong Way sign would have been a good picture to have taken for her photo-elicitation project as she spent good portions of her life alone, controlled, or disconnected: “It would

have fit perfectly and tied it altogether. I've went wrong way a lot in my life. There's nobody to guide you and tell you the right way." Others like Vernon and Spencer noted they had to contend with aspects of their parents they admired as well disliked.

Describing his complex relationship with his parents, Vernon said, "I need that, is a father to help his son. I mean, talk, you know, not financially, but, you know, emotionally. And he's not there, and I don't want to go back because it'd just be more heartache." He added that while his mom was supportive in many ways,

it went up and down. I've had tremendous love and you know, forgiven all those, everybody for all those things, and being abused and all that stuff. I've forgiven them. And now it's, my dad never, he's, he will never call me.... I didn't want to ask him for any help, you know, in this situation.

Vernon also spoke to the staggering sense of loss and betrayal he dealt with when ties were ruptured with his family and his church: "I still believe in the church and that's what really hurts because that was my support network, I believe 100% in it." He added, "When you're looked down upon, they look down their noses at you and, you know, believe stuff that's not true, um, it's, it's um, it's devastating because that was all my friends, all my support network, you know?"

Even in the face of many disrupted or abusive relationships, many spoke to having had corrective or healing relational experiences at some point along the way. B.P. spoke about the benefits of having a good boss, a caring roommate, service dogs, and a friend at the shelter from whom the unconditional love has allowed him to view connection as being possible again. Through his church and other positive involvements, James said he has come to learn it is more helpful to view women as friends and supports rather than as objects. Now that things are turning around, he said he wants to pursue a more "virtuous woman" than in the past. Kay noted how her housing challenges have

allowed for exposure to new relationships and realities that have been transformative. As she relayed, “My wall was huge. You couldn’t have found daylight in there. Still can’t. Except now I know it, now I recognize it.” Spencer indicated he was so used to “hard-learning love,” he has been unsure what to do with the positives that have been coming his way of late:

And I was just thinking the other day that, you know, you work and struggle, and you struggle and work, and then, you know, at, when it’s all said and done you’re lucky you have somebody to hold onto you that loves and cares about you. And I never really kind of had that, you know, I was always kind of, lot of hard-learning love, and a lot of hate and pain.... And now I’m just starting to get like, you know, nothing but love, so that’s kind of nice.... You know, but I don’t really know how to take that either, because I never really had that before, so it’s like, you know, kind of almost makes me feel uncomfortable sometimes.

Similarly, Blue has found she is slowly starting to turn around and be more open socially. In the past, she noted she had many distanced, surface level relationships and was generally mistrustful of the community. Previously, she noted she felt “the innocence is gone. Trust is gone. I look at things a lot differently now. I’m not, uh, I used to be afraid of everything.”

Many participants also discussed how working to reconnect with family members was a big source of motivation for them. Several alluded to wanting to reconnect before it was too late while alluding to personal work they needed to attend to before they felt reconciliation would be possible. Speaking to his goals of reconciliation with his daughters, Vernon shared, “I’m just having to, I have to focus on myself first and get myself healthy and rather than if I keep, you know, trying to communicate with them, it’s just gonna kill me again.” Yet such shifts were possible as James noted in the interim between interviews and member-check that he had worked through feelings of shame, engaged in self-forgiveness, and had been connecting more with family. James relayed

how “as I was taught at a young age that you’re a lot stronger with a lot of people, which is your family, then just you alone trying to do it yourself.” While still prone to self-blame, Spencer noted he too had been reconnecting with family slowly. Snickers shared she has been strengthening her family ties all the more as “it’s good that we’re all so close, because we can cry on each other’s shoulders.” She added, “I was very fortunate to have them and still am.”

Importance of Community Response

As impactful (positively or negatively) as familial and other intimate relationships could be for participants, so too were their experiences of support (or lack thereof) from their broader communities. Numerous participants spoke to the uplifting impact of knowing and encountering everyday people who conveyed care, gave of their time, and gave of their hearts. At the same time, some participants struggled when they were met with oppressive or judgmental responses from their communities.

In discussing the positive impact of the community, Vernon relayed he had almost always managed to find connection in the community when this lacked with family at times. Scooter indicated he derived a lot of sense of worth from having been a valued member of the community as a child, noting he has also appreciated how he has seen more of a positive community response to homelessness here compared to when he was in the Midwest: “A majority of people are more warm to the homeless people. Like every day you can go right across the street here, and there’s cars lined up with food, and clothes, and everything. They just hand it out.” Black also appreciated how there were positive community members who gave resources, supported him, and believed in him: “Yeah, you’re never alone. I mean you may feel alone sometimes, but you’re never,

there's always somebody out there, you just gotta be willing to talk to them." Black noted this had been particularly true for him with work:

They know where I'm at and my situation, and I just appreciate them giving me the opportunity to, to better myself with a job, I mean, anywhere that's willing to trust you.... By employing you is someone that, you know, put their faith in you I think.... So I definitely work that way when I'm at work too.

B.P. relayed, "I get things off of strangers like when I'm out and walking around town, and I say hello to somebody and they smile, even a perfect stranger or a complete stranger giving me just a two-second smile." Kay discussed how healing it had been for her to realize there were community members who cared. This was especially powerful as she never had to consider needing others before when she had previously been so closed off to the world: "I just think it's, that there's help out there. There's all these wonderful, wonderful people who do care. So I just, it just touched me." DeBroncos shared he is hoping to be able to lean on church supports to pull himself back up again. He indicated he generally likes being part of caring, reciprocal communities:

I was walking around and I saw, you know some bags of trash, I picked them up and put them in the trash can. And she goes, "Why can't more people be like you?" I go, "I don't know." It makes me feel like I'm good, not good, needed, not needed, but feels like I'm in a community where I, "Hey look, there's trash. I'll pick it up."

For some, like James, the catch-free support from church networks was an important asset as they worked to re-establish positive ties more broadly. As James said,

I can depend on my church people a lot more than I can depend on someone that, you know, wants five dollars to take you down a couple miles. The church will say, "If you need a move, we have a truck. We'll go down there and pick it up for you." I said, "Well I'll give you some gas money." They're like, "No, we're doing this because we want to do it for you." These people do it because they want something out of it also.

Yet like with most other relationships, participants were also quick to note that ties to the community could be negative in the face of stereotypes, stigmatization, implicit attitudes, and being treated as less than. B.P. had a lot of critical commentary on the impact of stereotypes, judging books by their cover, and his perceptions around the pervasive preferential treatment of those in privileged groups such as in academic environments and in the legal system:

You got teachers playing favoritism on the student who is dressed, you know, in the designer fancy brands, they're giving better treatment and more attention, preferential treatment.... They're like taking the ones that are born into a life of entitlement, and making their way even easier, though everything is always going to be easy for them, making it even easier, and the ones who want to get out of it, they're putting road blocks and putting more weight to their existence and misery, making it even harder for them to get out of it!

Scooter noted how the prevalence of negative stereotypes against those who are homeless made it harder to trust that he would be well received. Believing that a college he had tried to get into stereotyped him recently, Scooter described how such interactions take a toll on his confidence, faith, optimism, and sense of self-efficacy. He indicated such experiences took place in interactions with former friends as well: "You know everybody, stereotypes are really hard. And the way that we have so many of them and use them so frequently, it's real negative to society, into the community and everything else." Spencer felt the pervasiveness of stereotypes had impacted his ability to try to connect with others while homeless. With frustration, he shared,

They see me during the day, and they see that I'm working, I'm clean-cut, you know, I'm going to AA, and I'm staying sober, you know, and I have all these positive things going on. But I can't bring them home because I live in a homeless shelter, because I'm homeless. And then once you tell them that, then they think that like I'm just a regular drunken, alcoholic bum on the side of the street, you know, that hasn't taken a shower in forever.... It's hard to adjust with that too.... I'm trying to do that and establish relationships with other people, but once they find out that I'm living in a shelter, you know, or a homeless shelter, or,

you know, it's the same with women, you know you, you meet a really nice girl and then you find out she lives in a women's shelter, you know, the first thing you think of is, 'Oh, well she must have been neglected, or she must have been beaten or raped, or, you know, whatever.' You know, you instantly have these negative thoughts come in your head.... Whether you try to or not, you know, it doesn't matter because that just, that's what happens.

Jade, Vernon, and Blue all pointed to how stereotypes and lack of awareness were not only harmful and inaccurate but prevented the community from responding in a compassionate or helpful manner. Blue spoke to the relative invisibility of those who are homeless, indicating that others should take the time to help out and actually get to know people before passing judgment: "I help a lot of people on the way because where I've been at in life. Down here, I see the people. People that make money don't see them."

Along these lines, Jade said,

I mean there's other people I've met in the shelter that aren't like the normal, like society looks at people being homeless, they look at this bum or with this, you know, they have a stereotype for it. And there's a lot of women in here, like a couple of them that I hang out with that have their stuff, they're just normal people, you know like me, I consider myself normal, but you know what I mean?

Vernon spoke more directly to how community naiveté and judgments made it more difficult for him to bounce back. For Vernon, he felt a major factor was his church and generally affluent community really had no clue how to support him in his homelessness. In describing the response he received, he shared it was "just condescending. It's like, well, you know, nothing about, you know, can we help, or, you know, or, you know, it wasn't loving." Vernon truly felt rejected by the offensive response his community had provided him. He recalled,

I was treated like, "Well, you should be a big boy, you should be able to do this." It's like, you know, "I'm homeless." You know? And so people don't, they think that I'm a slacker or whatever and it's not the case. I was very down.

Context: Tangible and Relational Resources

When homeless, one can experience a sense of need across any number of domains. As this research was conducted at two different homeless shelters and many participants had experienced homelessness in more than one community, some tentative thoughts were offered around the impact of tangible and relational resources found (or not) in different contexts. Participants varied in their sense of whether or not they felt their communities possessed the requisite resources to meet their various needs. With regard to more basic needs, Scooter shared how “for somebody in homelessness. I mean, for one you can never go hungry. They feed you everywhere you go, there’s food everywhere!” Black expressed appreciation for the windfalls available for meeting basic needs: “Because we’ve been in those situations without food, and there’s, there’s somewhere where there’s good community, good people, who you know, meet for lunch, fellowship, whatever.” At the same time, Black added it had been challenging for him to get sufficient sleep given the intersection of his work schedule and shelter policies:

It’s not my home, it’s not, it’s somewhere to stay, but like I have to be out all day.... I work nights, so that’s something that’s really bothered me a lot, is I work at five until like two in the morning, I work ‘til close.... So you have to leave here, so I would get up, my routine was I would get up at six in the morning, do my chore, eat breakfast or whatever, then I have to be gone all day. I do my IOP classes from nine to 11, so that would give me something to do, but from 11 to five, like I had nowhere, I mean I have family and stuff, but nowhere to go hang out. I’ve been chilling at the library for like four months.

Christina and Jade lamented the lack of opportunities in their respective communities. In particular, Jade was critical of the lack of opportunities for connecting to any kind of community culture, prosocial adults, or generally healthy outlets. She said,

There’s like no outlets of any kind of creativeness here. Like all they do is do drugs and do gang violence. Like and what do you have, your system, your

courts? Um, what about-, oh you can go to the movies, you can go to the, there's nothing here to do. Like, but go to jail, do drugs, or work and stay home and watch, I mean there's no kind of outlets here.

Christina was not only frustrated with the waitlists for affordable living options but also the lack of supports available specifically for women. As she stressed, "There are so few places for women, shelters for women. But yet, there's places in abundance for men.... And I think that they need to really start making provisions for women as much as they do for the men!"

Stability is important. DeBroncos spoke to the inherent difficulties he encountered while navigating other shelters prior to gaining admission to the transitional shelter--a concern he was worried about moving forward as well. Vernon also spoke to how he felt many others do not understand the impact that insufficiently met basic needs can have on one's overall wellbeing and functioning. He said, "It helps when you have a place to sleep, you have food, you have, you know, you know, all, you know laundry and you know, showers, and all those things, it's, you know, it does a body good," adding that "you gotta have those before you can do a whole lot of other things." At the same time, Vernon recognized he needed support above and beyond meeting his basic necessities to re-establish himself. Vernon conveyed,

Here I really need help, I need people to, you know, find out why, why is it that I'm homeless and how, you know, not, you don't just give somebody a phone and you know, they, they're better, you know? It's like, you know, I, I need, you know, counseling and all these different things. And I need people to come over and teach, uh, spiritual lesson once a month, you know, and all those types of things that are very supportive. And I haven't had that. And so I went from all this support and wonderful life as a family to nothing, you know, I can't even really, I can't talk to my father. And, you know, um, this, it's been really difficult because I lost my entire support system.

Several participants were fairly critical about the quality and access to appropriate mental and physical health care as well as other forms of social services. Concerns were exaggerated for many on account of not having insurance, dealing with ballooning medical expenses, lacking transportation, and, at times, feeling discriminated against: Kay expressed her desire for more streamlined services; Spencer felt that once-a-week substance specific counseling was insufficient; DeBroncos complained of being impacted by the time lag in applying for SSDI; Cancerman was greatly impacted by improper communication around changes in his insurance policy and by poor oncological care; and B.P. noted he only just recently began to receive appropriate pain management services. Vernon was particularly outraged on account of having received substandard care and feeling discriminated against: “The first time when I went there it was terrible, I mean because the lady was Hispanic, and, and she’d look at me and was like, ‘Well, you’re city folk, you’re wealthy, what are you doing here?’ It’s like, heh, because that’s the way I looked.” Black spoke to his concerns for relapse in light of potentially insufficient follow-up care. While he appreciated the accountability and structure in place while treatment was mandated, he was concerned about how to maintain his gains. He also spoke to the general impact that negative service encounters could have on one’s confidence or likelihood of accessing services in the future:

We tried to go through a social services, and stuff like that, and follow their, you know, what they wanted us to do. But I had already been through it once, and I was like, “If it didn’t work before.” I was in that state of mind that it wasn’t going to work this time.

In general, participants from the smaller rural city spoke to the challenges of comparatively limited resources, worse transportation systems, and more routine exposure to negative peers as opposed to prosocial outlets. Black complained of running

into the same system-affiliated people all the time, noting how “I see a lot of stuff there. Kind of a lot of people still drinking, out laying in the gazebo and stuff, so it’s a reminder too about not wanting to be in that situation.” The lack of creative outlets and concerns for the presence of drug cartels led Jade to conclude she was in a “city without a soul,” which dramatically stood in contrast to some of her previous locales. She concluded,

Well there’s people that are living their lives, going to their job, there’s normal people. But a lot of people, because I take the bus, and a lot of people that are taking the bus are in a halfway house, um, you know, are all in the system. Like this town is a system, a system. And that’s what it’s about.

Meanwhile, those from the larger metropolitan area tended to speak more about the availability of resources, the quality transportation system, and the visible community support toward those who are homeless. Kay mentioned her amazement at the available resources, particularly the nearby daytime shelter for women that provided legal services, credit forgiveness information, and other forms of support. In addition to raving about the area transportation system and a sober living-based gym, Snickers spoke to the protective benefits of being immersed in a community context that had supports in place for individuals who are homeless, where the community members were involved, and with a city that invested in growth and renovation.

Reflections on the Research Process

The following represents a synthesis of the thematic elements that stood out from the reflexivity journal (Merriam, 1998) I maintained throughout the research process. In accordance with my efforts to bridle (Dahlberg, 2006) my biases throughout the research process, I noticed several tendencies I had to remain cognizant of throughout this investigation. I had to be cautious to not overly reflect or draw out strengths during moments when clients had more challenging information to present. This included my

need to not be overly restricting client tangents as well as to be careful with how I reflected or reframed what I was hearing from them. Understandably, this required earnest attention as my counseling background would indicate such responses would have been appropriate. At the same time, my training was helpful in moments when I might have held differing political, religious, or other beliefs that differed from participants. Next, I needed to be careful to not over-apply theoretical lenses onto participants' data at the expense of narrative accuracy. Along these lines, it was also important to bear in mind my stimulus value and the power differential between participants and myself. Use of interpretation during the restorying process had to be used judiciously in light of its potential to impact participants and/or be inaccurate. B.P.'s reticence around participating in the member-check process and Blue's eagerness around hearing my thoughts at the conclusion of our first interview clued me in to such considerations.

Another part of my experience involved some thoughts or concerns related to my personal safety during the research process. Such concerns were largely primed on account of being downtown by myself at night, carrying valuables, near an area purportedly inundated with substance abuse, and having heard participants' accounts about having been robbed themselves. Not only did this bring up feelings of empathy for the impact homelessness might have on one's sense of safety but it also made me reflect on whether or not my concerns were more reality-based or potentially stemming from some of my own implicit attitudes.

Despite such considerations, I was generally heartened by bearing witness to some of the care and support shown by some staff and residents toward one another.

During some of the resident meetings I observed, I was glad to see space was allotted for strengths-based and positive reflections. This was in addition to more pragmatic, informational, and rules-based considerations. Although somewhat contentious at one of the shelters, it generally seemed positive that residents had a forum to voice their concerns to staff. While between-resident interactions were not always the most positive (e.g., references made to the need to avoid negative influences), I generally noted a culture of care between the residents and a willingness to help one another.

I was also appreciative about how welcomed I felt in both communities. On all levels, there was general enthusiasm expressed for the research. Although already saturated with participants, there had been a general buzz about my research among the residents. While some individuals had inquired about the possibility of getting involved in passing, one gentleman had taken the time to write a note indicating he would be happy to participate if I needed him. At one of the shelters, I had a handful of informal dialogues with an older African American male resident whom I frequently encountered when there. This individual, whom I will call M.T., was polite and seemed interested in connecting. In our informal conversations, he self-disclosed from time to time--the content of those disclosure mostly aligned with themes identified in this investigation. There were also opportunities for dialogue around politics, stereotypes, spirituality, counseling, and the “escapism” of substances versus what he called “realism.”

The fact that M.T. was fairly refined in his understanding of individual and systemic factors that impact homelessness and appeared to be a more widely known figure in the shelter community made me consider the potential utility of more routine, informal dialogues with natural leaders within the shelter community. Various other

individual also commented to me at random, highlighting positive aspects of the shelter, challenging common misconceptions of homelessness, and one person even expressed frustration with the inaccuracy of homelessness simulations. In addition to the residents, staff members were friendly, intrigued, and accommodating. Some inquired about my background, how I had gotten involved with this line of research, and one staff member used me as a resource in inquiring about how one might go about getting into the counseling psychology field.

Although relatively minor, I also contended with some feelings of guilt throughout the research process. Having disengaged from my role as a volunteer prior to this project to minimize dual role potential, it was still challenging not to want to function in this capacity at times. It was also challenging at times to have to turn away interested individuals, either on account of exclusion criteria (particularly with veterans) or having already reached the point of saturation. Other challenges involved my inability to maintain anticipated timelines, having made a poor estimate of the amount of time the initial interview would take, and running late on a few occasions in light of the commute. Yet, taking a note from participants around the benefits of an attitude of gratitude, I was primarily grateful for the opportunity and privileged to hear their stories. Moments of vicarious resilience were certainly felt on my end.

A final theme stemming from my reflexivity journal related to how the process was viewed as both important and healing. Many selected and prospective participants appeared to just want to vent and unload right away. Yet this was inherently a vulnerable and highly personal process. As Blue put it plainly, “I have a feeling I’m going to be shedding some tears.” Kay said she felt her participation was enlightening, healing, and

helpful, and she wished it was my job to be available as this type of resource at the shelter. As she said, “I really didn’t even think I’d even cry, so that tells me I’m not healed.... So, you’ve helped me, you don’t even know it, but you’ve helped me.”

Christiana found the act of reflecting on her life and her relationships was fairly new for her and brought up interesting emotional reactions: “It’s just weird ... because you asked me about that. I don’t think anybody’s ever really asked me about that. And it kind of makes me confused almost, because I did love him and he was my dad!” Meanwhile, Spencer relayed,

By doing the last two interviews with you, you know, I’d look, really, you know, started to think about my past life and where I really was and where I am now.... You know and that, you know it’s actually kinda helped me a lot, it’s almost like a free counseling almost.... Because I’m able to get some of this stuff out, you know, instead of just having it booked up inside of me all the time.... You know it’s nice to, you know, let somebody else know about, you know, what life can really be like if you don’t stay true North, you know?

Vernon also expressed gratitude for getting to participate:

I’ve talked your ear off, but I um, I appreciate you, I appreciate you allowing me to participate in this, and to um, to tell you my story and I appreciate your, you know, for your, for your, um, for your, um, dissertation and all that. I mean that’s, I, I’m glad to be, that I was a part of, of your, um, your project.

At the same time, I had to be mindful that the impact of this research could have gone in a negative direction if not fielded appropriately. For instance, Scooter noted his participation did bring up some painful regrets by having looked back at what once was good for him. He shared it felt good to have emoted, yet was also painful. Spencer, meanwhile, had never really thought about some aspects about his shifting family dynamics before, which stirred up some emotions and new perspectives about his family ties. But overwhelmingly, most participants indicated they found their participation to be both enlightening and helpful.

Everyone suggested that they had enjoyed co-constructing their narratives with me and were appreciative of the opportunity to participate. Christina said, “You’re cool,” relaying my humor, insight, and demeanor helped her feel comfortable despite our identity-based differences. Vernon commented on having experienced “compassion,” while Spencer, Blue, James, and Black shared I helped them open up by being “down to earth” and “relatable,” a good and “respectful” listener, making them “comfortable,” and being both “receptive” and “professional,” respectively. Spencer, James, and Black expressed my transparency and the positive intention of the research helped them open up more. Kay relayed it helped her know her “major” in addition to finding it to be a safe and non-judgmental environment by noting I was “very, very calm. You know, you don’t come off like a you gotta plow through this course for another means. You seem to be engaged and I appreciate that.” Commenting on the research process as a whole, Blue said it provided a helpful assessment at a transition point in her life, while James described it as an “eye-opener.” Black was grateful as his involvement felt productive, purposeful, and as though he was doing one more thing to get his life “back on track.”

Trustworthiness

Numerous efforts were put forth to increase the accuracy and rigor of the data analysis, thereby enhancing trustworthiness. Prolonged setting and participant engagement, observation data, as well as a concurrent audit trail and reflexivity journal were used to allow for thick descriptions, ensure saturation, and enhance trustworthiness by positioning myself and bridling (Dahlberg, 2006) researcher biases. Triangulation was used to compare, contrast, and integrate multiple data sources (i.e., demographic forms, structured interviews, photo-elicitation interviews, interview-generated timelines,

and observational data from field texts). Further enhancing trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Morrow, 2005), transcripts and field texts were read and reread in order to more holistically comprehend and represent the narratives. The potential for transferability was enhanced through use of thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) and utilizing a multi-site design (Merriam, 1998).

Member-check procedures, in accordance with practices suggested for qualitative research (Creswell, 2007) and narrative inquiry more specifically (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), not only ensured greater credibility and dependability (Morrow, 2005) but also ensured that participants' voices were not smothered by researcher interpretation, informed consent was maintained, power imbalances were managed, and the narrative resonated with all involved. The member-check involved a collaborative review of the outline of the participants' narrative and intra-narrative themes. During this dialogue and review, participants were allowed the chance to offer suggestions, clarify material, add addendums, or request that certain material be withdrawn. As part of a broader debriefing process designed to bring closure to participants' involvement, those who engaged in the process commented on their experiences of interacting with me and of the research process more broadly.

All members were afforded the opportunity to engage in the member-checking process, yet only 7 of the 13 participants did so: Spencer, Christina, Cancerman, Black, Blue, James, and Vernon. Of those, all but Black participated in an in-person member-check with Black's having been conducted over the phone and via e-mail. Kay, Snickers, and Jade expressed interest in member-checking via e-mail, generally indicating that things were going well but then were lost at follow-up. Much like B.P., DeBroncos, and

Scooter, this may have been partly due to lengthy delays in my anticipated timelines. Again, changes in life circumstances, mental health concerns, and the seemingly avoidant attachment dynamics of a handful of these unaccounted for participants might offer a potential explanation for the absence of follow-up. Christina had actually expressed concern I might have forgotten about her due to temporary delay in anticipated follow-up. All participants were contacted several times and e-mailed a Word document of their re-storied narrative and extracted intra-narrative themes.

Of those who participated, all appeared pleased to see me, eager to provide updates on their life circumstances and feedback on their narratives, and glad to have been a part of the research process. Other than Spencer's bad news around how he had injured his knee after having been hit by a car and also had a friend recently die, and Cancerman indicating he had just broken up with his girlfriend, most indicated they had been making positive strides in their lives: Christina was glad to be leaving the shelter; Vernon, Blue, and Christina had obtained new jobs while Spencer, James, and Black continued to work; Vernon, Spencer, Blue, and James noted they had taken positive steps toward reconciliation with family while Cancerman and Blue discussed general improvements in other social relationships; and Spencer and James were grateful for their continued sobriety. All provided approval of their narratives, verifying their accuracy with only a few minor content-based and interpretive revisions offered while noting I had captured the important parts of their narratives. Most were okay with their representation though Vernon and James had elected to change their names to pseudonyms. Black said it was "interesting" to see the manner in which he spoke written on the page. Christina,

Spencer, Vernon, and Black all expressed an interest that their narratives be spread widely so as to have their story known and offer both help and insight to others.

A counseling psychology doctoral student who was methodologically-trained offered consensual validation through the peer check process. Peer checking (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) involved first independently and then collaboratively reviewing my procedures for data collection, transcription, coding, triangulation, thematic analysis, restorying, and representation. Much like in the member-checking process, most of the feedback was confirmatory with minor revisions in content helping to more accurately represent and punctuate certain features of participants' narratives. Feedback from peer review brought greater awareness to researcher bias through use of interpretation in addition to helping capture some of the inherent contradictions in a few narratives. Peer checking also brought minor revision to themes and the manner in which participant narratives were portrayed, namely with regard to protecting participants' confidentiality and through slight adaptations of voice. Overall, peer procedural, narrative, and thematic resonance added trustworthiness to the findings.

Conclusion

Analysis was guided by the desire to develop greater understanding of how attachment and resiliency-based contextualized narratives of adults who are homeless shed light on their pathway into, adaptation to, and current outlook regarding their present state of homelessness. More specifically, the intent was to explore the degree and manner in which the cumulative, subjective impact that one's childhood and adult attachment history, individual and systemic risk/protective factors history, and perceived relationship to their community had on the outlook of adults who were currently

experiencing some level of homelessness. In particular, this analysis was guided by the research questions laid out in Chapter I:

Q1 How does the reciprocal influence between perceived context and the individual play out across the lifespan in light of possible:

Q1a Attachment and

Q1b Resiliency themes?

In narrative inquiry, the researcher can focus on particular phenomena or themes across narratives or can focus more holistically on individual narratives themselves (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The primary goal here was to understand the individual, contextualized narratives first and then look at thematic overlap. Thus, within-case analysis of all 13 participants' narratives was presented with thick descriptions (Denzin, 1989) prior to the thematic results of the cross-narrative analysis. Individual narratives were thickened through use of triangulation (Denzin, 1970): the process of using, comparing, and contrasting multiple sources of data (i.e., interviews, photographs, field texts, observations of the site, participant encounters, and participants' nonverbal behavior). The process of cross-narrative analysis generated nine broad themes:

- Plurality of Pathways
- It is Scary to Become Homeless
- Adversity and Resilience Abound
- Individualized Coping Strategies
- Catch-22 of Individual-Level Protective Factors
- Secure Versus Insecure: Which is More Adaptive?
- Importance of Positive Attachment Ties

- Importance of Community Response
- Context: Tangible and Relational Resources

Nine overarching themes were generated through cross-narrative analysis, all of which provided opportunities to develop greater compassion for and perspective around pathways into homelessness, common lived experiences both prior to and during homelessness, as well as a more refined awareness of the interplay among both relational, contextual, and systemic risk/protective factors at various points across the lifespan. Reflections from my reflexivity journal and audit trail, which included notes from member-check meetings, conveyed how both the participants and I were impacted throughout the research process. Numerous efforts to enhance trustworthiness were made throughout the research process and were reviewed herein. Particular attention was devoted to reviewing the results of both the member-checking and peer checking processes. My hope is both the individual narratives and cross-narrative themes will help grant mental health providers, relevant stakeholders, and the public at large a more diversified and nuanced understanding of the population of adults who currently reside in a transitional homeless shelter, recognizing both their diverse needs as well as their capacity for resilience.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Through this research, I investigated the confluence of attachment, resiliency, and context over the life course of adults who were currently homeless and residing in a transitional shelter. The primary purpose of this investigation was to portray participants' narratives fully and with thick description so they were properly contextualized while allowing space for counter-narrative elements to come across (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). In so doing, I attempted to “unbraid” the dynamic ways in which adversity and strength, risk and resilience, as well as barriers and triumph have and continue to unfold across participants' narratives (Brown et al., 2012).

The results of this study were obtained through the triangulation (Denzin, 1970) of multiple data sources, bridling of researcher biases, and efforts to increase trustworthiness. Demographic questionnaires, verbatim transcripts from structured interviews, participant-driven photo-elicitation projects, photographs, field texts, observational data from prolonged setting and participant engagement, and interview generated timelines were included in the process of data analysis. Trustworthiness was enhanced through maintenance of a reflexivity journal and audit trail, time spent immersed in the setting and data, as well as using both member and peer checks (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Morrow, 2005). The prior chapter began with the in-

depth presentation of within-narrative analysis for all 13 participants' restoried narratives. Cross-narrative analysis presented the following broad themes regarding how aspects of attachment and resiliency played out across their life spans:

- Plurality of Pathways
- It is Scary to Become Homeless
- Adversity and Resilience Abound
- Individualized Coping Strategies
- Catch-22 of Individual-Level Protective Factors
- Secure Versus Insecure: Which is More Adaptive?
- Importance of Positive Attachment Ties
- Importance of Community Response
- Context: Tangible and Relational Resources

Following the presentation of cross-narrative themes, I expounded upon reflections and observations from the research process. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested, it was important to consider the dynamic ways in which both the participants and I were affected by our collaborations. Not only was I honored to bear witness to their lives but by looking at the enduring influence and processing of participants' attachment histories, current and historically close relationships, as well as other protective and risk factors that promoted or hindered resilient adaptation within homelessness, over time, and across contexts, I shed light on an infinitely complex, idiographic, and structurally-influenced process. In light of the purpose of this investigation and the broad research questions that undergirded the process, the present chapter synthesizes the findings with reference to current literature as well as

methodological, theoretical, and applied implications for counseling psychologists (and relevant stakeholders). The chapter concludes with a review of the limitations of this study, aspirations for future directions, and final reflections on the research process as a whole.

Purpose of the Study

In accordance with the principles of the positive psychology movement (Seligman, 1999; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and theory of goodness put forth by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), the purpose of this dissertation was to provide a forum for possible lifespan counter-narratives (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) from adults who were currently experiencing an episode of homelessness and residing in a shelter. When one adopts a philosophical stance in favor of positive psychology and goodness, one intentionally inquires about what is right or going well while simultaneously recognizing that individuals and situations are inherently imperfect (Davis, 2014). Or as Magyar-Moe, Owens, and Conoley (2015) said, “Positive psychologists are as concerned with building strengths and the best things life has to offer as they are with managing weaknesses and repairing the worst things in life” (p. 510). For example, narratives in this investigation had themes of strength, resiliency, and positive attachment relationships amidst substance use/abuse, mental health, interpersonal, and emotionally related concerns. This investigation was also in accordance with the recommendations from the American Psychological Association (2009). Those recommendations included directing a specific focus on prevention efforts and finding ways to promote resiliency both in clinical practice and beyond (APA, 2009). Since the majority of people who are homeless are first time or episodically homeless as

opposed to chronically homeless, I followed APA's (2009) charge to "address the cause, course, prevention, and remediation of homelessness" (p. 3) predominantly for those who met this criterion.

The APA (2009) also encouraged researchers to examine protective and resiliency factors among those who are homeless and without substance abuse concerns in an effort to find ways to reduce the length and consequences of homelessness. Although factors such as substance use might often serve as immediate precursors to or sustaining factors of homelessness for some participants, I sought a more layered, contextualized understanding of the participants' past and present circumstances, protective and risk factors, and situational outlook through the empathically generative lens of critical poverty, attachment, and resiliency theories. Previous attachment-based inquiries had been applied quantitatively with samples of runaway and homeless adolescents (e.g., Tavecchio et al., 1999; Taylor-Seehafer et al., 2008) and veterans (e.g., Rodell et al., 2003) while many previous resiliency studies had focused on resiliency as an inherent individual trait (Bonanno, 2004; Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002; Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005). As informative as the nomothetic understanding of correlated risk factors have been, such inferential analyses were limited in their inability to understand the idiographic pathway of the individual case. While individual traits can be a component of resilient responding, as I have demonstrated in this investigation, it is a far more systemic and process-based sequence of responding to setbacks such as one's pathway into homelessness.

This investigation addressed this apparent gap in the literature by considering the contextualized narratives of individuals who were at various stages of homelessness (i.e.,

first time, episodic, or chronic) to better understand their experiences, their strengths and protective factors, and how attachment dynamics played out as a precursor to and moderating factor for homelessness in both adaptive and maladaptive ways. This gap was important to address for counseling psychologists and relevant stakeholders as it has illuminated possible points of intervention prior to or in the midst of homelessness, provided a more empathic and holistic understanding of pathways to homelessness, and given a better sense of the interaction between perceived protective or risk factors, attachment relationships, and contexts over time. Such strengths-based and empathic considerations might be helpful for establishing trust (Poremski, Whitley, & Latimer, 2015), forging appropriate therapeutic alliances, and overcoming mistrust or fears of being viewed as someone who needs to be “fixed” (Petrovich & Cronley, 2015).

Through this inquiry I asked in what ways did the exploration of homeless adults’ attachment contextualized narratives shed light on their pathway into, adaptation to, and current outlook regarding their present state of homelessness? More specifically, I was interested in the degree and manner in which the cumulative, subjective impact that one’s childhood and adult attachment history, individual and systemic risk/protective factors history, and perceived relationship to their community had on the outlook of adults who were currently experiencing some level of homelessness.

The following broad questions overlaid and guided this narrative inquiry:

Q1 How does the reciprocal influence between perceived context and the individual play out across the lifespan in light of possible:

Q1a Attachment and

Q1b Resiliency themes?

Summary of Findings and Relationship with Current Literature

In having read this research, my hope would be that counseling psychologists, other mental health professionals, outreach workers, and relevant stakeholders would say: A careful systemic examination and discussion of protective/risk factors and attachment-relevant material across the lifespan might prove useful in my work with clients who are either homeless or at-risk for homelessness. Also, an attachment perspective might help me better understand my client's worldview while an exploration of resiliency processes might cast my client in a more agentic/capable, humanistic light with internal and external strengths that could be utilized or built upon therapeutically. Lastly, it is important to consider the reciprocal influence between the individual and his/her immediate and broader contexts. This might be useful for determining potential barriers to accessing resources (if present to begin with), understanding and counteracting potentially oppressive forces in the environment, as well as developing a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which certain behaviors have been both adaptive and maladaptive depending on the context.

The presentation of rich individual narratives in the within-narrative analysis section of Chapter IV represented separately and collectively unique findings that addressed the broad research questions of interest. As indicated by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the individual, contextualized narratives presented with thick description were inherently findings in of themselves. At the same time, by having triangulated so many sources of data within and across all 13 participants' narratives, the cross-narrative analysis revealed nine broad and tentative themes. The relevance of these themes to the broad research questions and current literature is summarized below.

Plurality of Pathways

As was presented in Chapter IV and highlighted in Table 2, there was no singular pathway participants traversed on their way to becoming homeless. This finding aligned well with the claim that the only commonality among those who are homeless is they are unhoused (Friedman & Levine-Holdowsky, 1997) with several reporting an accumulation of various risk factors related to poverty (Morrell-Bellai et al., 2000). As Tsai et al. (2011) found, participants did indeed have differing situational and experiential narratives despite residing in a shelter/level II setting (Morrell-Bellai et al., 2000). Much like Goering et al. (2002), I did not find consistent differences in background that differentiated first time from episodically homeless participants. Such a finding inherently challenges narrow, stereotyped depictions around homelessness and how one might arrive at such a state. Indeed, the plurality of pathways with which participants arrived at the shelter suggested points of prevention and early intervention could be wide-ranging and necessitated an initially broad lens for providers seeking to understand an individual's current state of homelessness.

At the same time, many of the precursive risk factors experienced by the participants and depicted in the columns of Table 3 were consistent with the conditions mentioned by APA (2009). Additionally, while participants' pathways into homelessness indicated a broad lens might have greater utility than a narrow lens for understanding their circumstances, their narratives around their entrance into homelessness were largely consistent with overarching findings from the pathways literature, particularly those of Chamberlain and Johnson (2013). Chamberlain and Johnson (2013) identified four primary pathways into homelessness: housing crisis, family breakdown, substance use

and mental health, and youth to adult. They described housing crisis pathways as involving financial crises of some sort, potentially due to a number of individual and structural factors that overwhelm one's capacity to remain housed and especially if one's prior circumstances and environment contained a relative dearth of economic and relational protective factors (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2013). Kay, Scooter, DeBroncos, and Cancerman had elements of their narratives that aligned with this pathway.

Meanwhile, family breakdown pathways often involved domestic violence or one partner leaving/abandoning the other (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2013). While not solely responsible for their respective pathway into homelessness, such refrains were noted in the narratives of Spencer, Blue, and Vernon. Some of Blue's earlier homelessness episodes were consistent with the findings of Bufkin and Bray (1998); they found that as an added complication, many survivors of domestic violence, who might or might not have to deal with PTSD, wind up becoming homeless after escaping their abusive situation. Related to the family breakdown pathway are struggles with parental divorce and blended family dynamics; this is not to suggest that parental divorce is a causal factor for later homelessness. Rather, as noted by Tavecchio et al. (1999), depending on the age of the individual, such a loss of an attachment bond might convey the message that others are unstable and not there to protect you, the experience might be introjected into self-blame, and might disrupt previously held relational templates. Parental separation or divorce was highly prevalent within participants' narratives. Participants like Christina, B.P., and Vernon struggled with handling such shifts.

The substance use and mental health pathway entailed disabling conditions that impacted one's ability to maintain stability of employment and housing (Chamberlain &

Johnson, 2013). While not universally true, this was a common experience reported by most of the participants in either acute or longer-standing forms. Spencer, Christina, Black, James, Snickers, as well as B.P. and Scooter (previously) all discussed the impact of substance use on their housing status. Vernon and DeBroncos spoke explicitly how recently triggered mental health concerns further aggravated their efforts to exit homelessness.

Lastly, Chamberlain and Johnson (2013) indicated the youth to adult pathway involved exposure to adverse childhood and other negative experiences prior to age 18, which contributed to later homelessness in adulthood. Some factors from childhood most strongly associated with homelessness in adulthood included poverty and related correlates; experiences of myriad forms of abuse, neglect, and caregiver abandonment; transience and instability of living arrangements; as well as parental mental health issues such as substance abuse (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010). Consistent with the findings of my pilot narrative case study (Roche, 2012) and indicated in Table 3, nearly all participants recalled abusive attachment experiences. These experiences ranged from neglect and verbal harassment, early exposure to parental substance abuse and other mental health concerns, to physical and possible sexual abuse. Unfortunately, the prevalence of such experiences in childhood for adults who are homeless was an expected finding (Larkin & Park, 2012; Torchalla et al., 2012). Also, similar to the observation by Yoshikawa et al. (2012), participants here had quite the range of experienced poverty both prior to and during their homelessness. Indeed, those such as Black, B.P., Christina, and James who experienced varying levels of chronic poverty at some point in childhood also had varying levels of disruption in their relationships with primary caregivers. As several

authors have noted (APA, 2009; Herman, 1997; Perry & Szalavitz, 2006), it is important to consider the developmental halts, such as those related to emotional regulation, that can carry over into adulthood in the face of early poverty, homelessness, adverse experiences, and chronic traumas.

What was also evident and what could be gleaned by reading across the columns of Table 3 was many participants experienced multiple precipitant stressors that either directly contributed to or preceded their homelessness. Several participants' narratives overlapped with more than one of the common pathways identified by Chamberlain and Johnson (2013). Cornes, Manthorpe, Joly, and O'Halloran (2014) referred to such an accumulation of additive risk factors as multiple exclusion homelessness. They argued that individuals who present in such a fashion might require more of a personalized and well-networked approach to help support their reintegration efforts. As Patterson et al. (2012) found by co-creating developmental timelines with individuals who were homeless, I too found that in the face of chronic inequity, there was evidence of many negative risk factors (e.g., negative or disrupted attachment relationships) and an accumulation of increased levels of risk and experiences of marginalization over time for many participants. Several participants spoke to the negative impact of childhood and adulthood living instability that was found to contribute to a sense of marginalization (DeForge et al., 2008; Schmitz et al., 2001).

Much of the present pathways exploration has so far focused on individual and familial-level factors that contributed to participants' homelessness. Yet it is now commonly known that the cascade of both structural and individual factors converged to cause and further marginalize those who are homeless (APA, 2009). Indeed, the

contemporary academic view on precursors to homelessness recognized that certain macro-level factors (e.g., experiences of poverty, inadequate and overpriced housing supply, increasing unemployment rates) could reciprocally interact with individual risk factors for homelessness (Fitzpatrick, 2005; Pleace, 1998). Several participants named structural barriers that impacted their homelessness (e.g., violent domiciles and environments, differential access to education, and unprotected job security in dangerous environments), which were consistent with the structure/context counter-narrative's disruption around attributions of individual inferiority (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010).

Blue, Christina, and others spoke to the negative impact of the many costs of poverty; some who lived in the urban environment commented on displacement concerns (Lott, 2012). Several participants named their experience of institutional classism in their encounters with the police, the justice system, social services, higher education, and various employers, all of which impacted their access to the needed resources and means of alleviating their homelessness (Lott, 2012). Vernon and Scooter were critical of the fact that their commonly privileged identity markers (i.e., White and male) prevented their access to benefit programs, a finding consistent with Lee et al. (2010). While this is addressed later on in this chapter, several participants also named the painful impact of prejudicial and discriminatory interpersonal classism (APA, 2009; Lott, 2012; Smith & Mao, 2012; Smith & Redington, 2010).

The ability to name structural factors that impact one's homelessness might be one way in which resiliency is promoted (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). Such principles are alive and well in group therapy interventions like those of the

Emancipatory Communitarianism approach (Brubaker, Garrett, Rivera, & Tate, 2010), wherein there is a focus on developing critical consciousness, reflecting on strengths, and general support toward greater authorship of one's life. In their examination of how participants attributed their situation and looked at or explained systemic barriers, Godfrey and Wolf (2015) found most responded by reflecting on individual characteristics while those who looked at structural barriers (less than half) tended to espouse self-critical beliefs as well. Godfrey and Wolf argued these were not necessarily single continuum processes, as one can hold oneself accountable while also recognizing systemic barriers. Yet they argued the internalizations of dominant narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Easton-Brooks, 2012; White & Epston, 1990), such as the belief in a just system, impeded the development of a critical consciousness. At the same time, the findings of Nguyen et al. (2012) suggest some participants' efforts to take accountability for their situation might have helped buffer some of the stress surrounding their circumstances.

Many participants in the present investigation were able to name some of the meso- or macro-systemic barriers that had affected them over time, which tend to be the case with people who are lower-income (Godfrey & Wolf, 2015), but most also tended to engage in higher levels of self-blame. For instance, a few participants spoke to the impact of government-based decisions with universal health care, access to education, insufficient minimum wage levels, the process of applying for disability, and efforts that displaced individuals who are homeless. Godfrey and Wolf (2015) noted it could be a process to develop greater levels of critical consciousness and agency, a finding consistent with some of the participants here. B.P. was one participant who used to focus

solely on individual attributions for his homelessness and recently began to wonder about more structural factors that impacted him. Grabe and Dutt (2015) argued the presentation of such structure/context (and other) counter-narratives is a vital component of social movements around creating a more inclusive society. They noted that broader social action, which recognizes others' rights, begins by directly challenging the hegemonic discourse that oppresses many (Grabe & Dutt, 2015). Threads of such uprooting discourse were expressed by several participants.

It is Scary to Become Homeless

While some participants appeared to have taken their transition into and experience of homelessness in relative stride, this was not universally true. Several participants (Kay, Spencer, Black, Vernon, and Scooter) spoke to the shock of first becoming homeless, the challenge of navigating resources, and the difficulties of balancing short-term needs with longer-term solutions. Bonanno (2004) was quick to point out that resilience pathways do not equate to impervious responses in the face of challenging events and setbacks. Rather, resilience is thought to refer to one's ability to gradually return to a homeostatic balance (Bonanno, 2004). The acute shock and fear around becoming homeless reported by some participants were consistent with a recent phenomenological examination by Petrovich and Cronley (2015). Their participants also reported a plurality of pathways toward becoming homeless with loss and social isolation underlying many of their transitions. Common to their participants' experience was the sense that it is scary to become homeless; uncertainty and mistrust of service providers might contribute to an over-reliance on individual protective factors and street-based networks (Petrovich & Cronley, 2015).

Bowlby (1988) stated that conditions of attachment threat have the potential to alter one's relational scripts and, thereby, their attachment styles. Arguably, the process of becoming homeless might be considered an attachment threat condition as many participants noted their sense of personal and relational security was severely disrupted during the course of becoming homeless. Several participants, who struggled more initially, appeared to lack some of the protective factors that might have helped during their initial transition to homelessness. For instance, Neiman (1988) found that in order to perform under duress and respond with true resiliency, secure attachment, a variety of coping skills, the ability to emotionally regulate, and adaptive models of parental coping were helpful. Lacking a literal, emotional, and symbolic secure base (Bowlby, 1988; Johnson, 2007), the attachment threat condition of homelessness might have inhibited some participants' secure base behavior and thereby their ability to navigate resources and needed services.

A few participants spoke to the difficulty they experienced in trying to discover and navigate resources while homeless. While this might have related to a lack of familiarity with the terrain for some, such as Scooter, others named the distress involved with working to find stability, resources, employment, and housing. As would have been predicted by Bowlby (1973), several participants in this investigation exhibited maladaptive interpersonal behavior for accessing resources in the face of fatigue, illness, and stressful situations. For instance, Kay and Scooter noted they struggled at first with being overly stubborn and obstinate, whereas others like Spencer and Black found they became more secretive and reclusive. Such difficulties might point to the benefits of shelter staff working hard to create an effective secure base for residents. Several

participants commented on the beneficial grounding and re-orienting they received following their admission to the shelter.

Another common challenge participants were working through related to weighing the pros and cons of short-term fixes with longer-term possibilities while wanting to avoid falling into a trap of homelessness. For example, participants such as Kay, Jade, Spencer, Scooter, and Blue struggled at various points with “hidden homelessness” wherein they sought out short-term places to obtain shelter (Finley & Diversi, 2010). These types of living arrangements often came at a cost as they exposed some participants to negative environments and relapse-inducing peers. Such costs were consistent with Epel et al.’s (1999) finding that short-term benefits of such options were often clouded by long-term costs and subsequent episodes of homelessness.

Debating the relative merits of short-term employment options versus pursuing education, credentialing, and longer-term career options was a common refrain for numerous participants. Epel et al. (1999) might have argued that the consideration of longer-term options likely contributed to how the majority of participants secured some form of employment at some point prior to or over the course of their participation in this investigation. At the same time, some participants like Vernon and Scooter discussed similar employment-related concerns and considerations found by Lee et al. (2010). As noted by Lee et al. (2010), those who are homeless are disproportionately at risk for exposure to violence; have attempted to find stable economic positioning often thwarted by either a lack of job skills or limited access to mainly low paying, temporary, at times unsafe, and non-benefitted forms of employment; and are often forced to seek more obscure or non-mainstream routes for sustainability (e.g., recycling, panhandling, plasma

donation, or illegal behaviors). Findings such as these highlighted the added challenges individuals who are homeless might have to navigate above and beyond their lack of housing.

Adversity and Resilience Abound

Every single participant reported having had to contend with myriad forms of adversity and potentially traumatic experiences over their life course above and beyond their experiences with homelessness. And yet each of them, in their own respective ways, managed to continually bounce back, survive, and at times thrive. This finding aligned with Tedeschi and Kilmer's (2005) impetus to consider both risk and protective factors when examining how one adjusts in the face of adversity. Or as Neiman (1988) suggested, resiliency should be viewed as a "spectrum of functioning.... Vulnerability and resilience might be thought of as a wide range of strengths and weaknesses that all children have in relation to specific stressors and situations at various times in their lives" (p. 24). The fact that participants found ways to persevere, overcome, and respond resiliently at various points over the life course, despite how many of them lacked the type of pro-resiliency caregiver relationships Masten and colleagues (Masten & Reed, 2002; Masten & Shaffer, 2006) described, was undoubtedly impressive. Importantly, this investigation helped thicken the understanding of the at-times extended bumps some participants experienced along the way, particularly with regard to the mental health and historical substance use concerns exhibited by some participants. As Herrman et al. (2011) noted, "Resilience may be context and time specific and may not be present across all life domains" (p. 260). Thus, it was not surprising that many participants alluded to the fact they felt like they were working hard to persevere along a narrow path.

Similar to this investigation, others have fortunately afforded space for a more empathic standpoint regarding substance use and mental illness in adulthood to emerge, namely through focusing on the at-times devastating impact of adverse childhood experiences (Morrell-Bellai et al., 2000). Herman (1997) vehemently argued for the need to conceptualize trauma and adverse circumstances along a continuum of increased risk while the APA Council of Representatives (1991) observed the reciprocal influence between these various areas of concerns as well.

Like Taylor-Seehafer et al. (2008), this investigation revealed a range of abusive, neglectful, and disrupted attachment relationships had often preceded subsequent substance abuse, criminal behavior, and bad decisions. Certainly some exceptions existed as participants like Snickers and Cancerman reported having had very positive and secure patterns of attachment to their parents. Yet as was observed by Rodell et al. (2003), many participants (Spencer, Christina, B.P., and Blue) described insecure patterns of attachment to their caregivers that at some point contributed to negative views of themselves, identity-based confusion, an underdevelopment of emotional regulation and general coping strategies, and mixed patterns of trust shown toward others.

As expounded upon by Bowlby (1980), the impact of grief and various forms of loss could not be understated in this investigation. Whether longing for the absent parent, trying to make sense of the death of a parent or loved one, losing custody and contact with one's child(ren), or mourning the end of a significant relationship, the ripple effects of grief and loss were certainly reported by participants here. Whereas Bowlby spoke to the adaptive aspects of grief when one has the emotional and environmental resources to process the loss and make the corresponding adjustment in attachment behavior, many

participants lacked such coping supports at the time of their respective losses. At the risk of insinuating a direct causal connection, many participants noted that concerns related to substance abuse or other mental health concerns often became exaggerated in the aftermath of a loss.

Bowlby (1980) found the disruption to one's attachments contributed to maladaptive patterns of grief, such that compulsive self-reliance might pervade and avoidant attachment behaviors might override prior patterns of attachment and oppressive feelings of guilt and mental health concerns later on (Bowlby, 1980; Hayashi & Strickland, 1998). It was also noted that Bowlby found similar patterns could emerge from other forms of losses such as losing one's job or being evicted from one's home. Thus, the process of responding in a resilient manner to various types of losses was important to explore. Secure relationships, accurate information, and a supportive base for emotional processing were found to be important protective factors for healthy responding to such adversity (Bowlby, 1980). While some participants appeared to be struggling to integrate or make sense of their respective losses, others, such as Snickers and James, managed to draw from sources of emotional and relational support for processing their losses.

Despite the myriad losses, setbacks, and potentially traumatic experiences, many participants went on to some level of higher education, several had successful careers and were homeowners, and most were creative, intelligent, capable, and had strong work ethics. A handful of participants appeared to have benefitted from the ameliorating benefits of educational attainment found by both Finley and Calabrese Barton (2003) and Kennedy et al. (2010). It was also not surprising that many participants indicated their

positive functioning coincided with current or prior periods of steady employment. Rodell et al. (2003) found this might be one way to guard against the damaging effects of early adverse experiences. Similar to what was noted by Schoon (2006), resiliency for many participants appeared in the form of maintaining a positive outlook, continuing positive functioning while adversity experiences were ongoing, and bouncing back from traumatic experiences. Indeed, such findings were not surprising as Bonanno (2004) and Masten (2001) indicated patterns of resilient responding were still common even in the face of having grown up in disadvantaged conditions.

It was evident participants had been working hard to stay employed (or find employment) and to maintain sobriety (or were never challenged by this to begin with). Most participants had recently obtained employment or were actively searching, barring a disability-related restriction. A few participants, like Kay, Scooter, and Blue, were fairly savvy regarding their understanding of structural obstacles to employment they had been working to overcome. As found by Chamberlain and Johnson (2013), the majority of participants were actively trying to get out of their homelessness but this was mitigated somewhat by whether or not they viewed such an opportunity as being present. As espoused by Krumer-Nevo and Benjamin (2010), such agency/resistance counter-narrative elements present in this investigation gave voice to the working homeless, those who challenged harmful political discourse and policy (Finley & Diversi, 2010), and those who were actively striving to assert themselves into the workforce.

Although problems with substance use have frequently been studied among individuals who are homeless and emerged in the narratives of numerous participants herein, the explicit focus within research has created a stigma. The manner in which

several participants, such as Spencer, Scooter, Jade, and James, worked to maintain sobriety by avoiding relapse-inducing influences and engaging with sobriety fostering environments and peers not only challenged such stigma but also aligned with Bender et al.'s (2007) findings around the development of street smarts and negotiating reciprocal relationships. More broadly, such stigma overlooked how the majority of individuals did not struggle with substance use or were maintaining sobriety, substance use and homelessness might have had an unclear reciprocal relationship, and certain factors like social support could mediate this relationship (Ferguson & Xie, 2012). For many, the shelter represented one such source of social support from which participants derived benefit.

Most participants alluded to the resiliency-promoting benefits their respective shelters afforded them. Given the disruptive and scary aspects participants indicated had been part of their transition into homelessness, Swick's (2005) claim that it was vital that shelters "train staff that work with homeless families to be skilled in nurturing in families [and individuals] a safe, secure, and loving sense of belonging" (p. 197) appears all the more prudent. As noted in a pilot study (Roche, 2012), participants also found that staff members' empathic attunement and acknowledgement of strengths/ resiliency were vital; after all, participants were homeless--not hopeless. At the same time, as Farrell (2010) observed, several participants alluded to having difficulty with some of the structure imposed by shelter rules and staff. Though appreciative, the transition to a more structured environment was certainly challenging for a handful of participants. Such transition-related considerations are likely important for shelter staff to consider.

While resilience and posttraumatic growth (Brown et al., 2012; Herrman et al., 2011) are different constructs, they fall along the continuum of possible ways of responding to adverse circumstances. Whereas resiliency relates to the ability to bounce back and maintain homeostasis, posttraumatic growth involves a shift beyond one's former state in terms of having a greater perspective on life, sense of inner strength, possible increased spiritual development, and appreciation for one's positionality (Brown et al., 2012). Brown et al. (2012) noted a mixed possibility for pathology or resilience following traumatic exposures with the imminent potential for future trauma complicating those pathways. At the same time, resilience, or the lack of posttraumatic stress disorder or other sustained mental health complications, has been associated with the least posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). After all, "Resilient outcomes typically provide little need or opportunity for PTG" (Westphal & Bonanno, 2007, p. 417). While some participants, like Blue, might not have always bounced back right away from various life stressors, such periods might have served another role.

Posttraumatic growth, on the other hand, necessitates change for the better following adversity. This can only occur if the trauma is unsettling and sustained long enough to lead to positive interpretations and narrative revisions of the adverse event (Brown et al., 2012). While posttraumatic growth was not the focus of this investigation, such refrains emerged as a theme within and across some participant narratives. This was not surprising because evidence has shown posttraumatic growth among homeless populations in the past, which is relevant considering the increased rates of exposure to traumatic experiences (Stump & Smith, 2008; Tischler, Edward, & Vostanis, 2009). Huey, Fthenos, and Hryniewicz (2013) found a heavy bias toward focusing on homeless

women's traumatized and victimized responses concerning experiences of violence. Relatively few have entertained the possibility that many might have been able to respond to such adversity with resiliency (Huey et al., 2013). In their investigation, Huey et al. (2013) found that although experiences of direct violence were fairly prevalent for this population, a majority viewed themselves as strong survivors who also exhibited personal protective factors through positive outlooks, emotions, and behaviors, as well as processing and resolution-based coping strategies. Such refrains were evidenced in the narratives of both Kay and Blue.

Individualized Coping Strategies

Much like the pathways literature and Herrman et al.'s (2011) claim that there are plenty of inroads for fostering resilient responses, so too did participants here exhibit myriad, individualized forms of coping with adversity related to their present circumstances and beyond. Like the individual-level protective factors identified by Brown et al. (2012) and Herrman et al. (2011), participants here exhibited varying combinations of: openness, positive cognitive appraisal, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, optimism, higher intellectual functioning, active coping, and the ability to integrate experiences of adversity into a coherent narrative. Participants also displayed some broad individual-level characteristics conducive for resilient responding identified by Bonanno (2004): aspects of hardiness, self-enhancement, repressive coping, and positive affect. The emergence of such individual-level factors aligned with the voice/action counter-narrative (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010; Moxley et al., 2012) as individuals' unique strengths, alternative perspectives, and inherent wisdoms became

apparent, directly challenging some dominant narratives surrounding their emphasized susceptibility and deficits.

As many participants focused on matters that gave them a sense of purpose, a sense of self-efficacy, and reframed various trials as learning experiences, so too did they enact aspects of hardiness (Bonanno, 2004). Frankl (1959) asserted that discovering what bears meaning for oneself and realizing one's purpose in life are vital tasks for achieving wellness and sustainability. Many participants were able to name goals, relationships, and values that aligned with such a sense of purpose. Several participants also noted it felt good to reflect on their many positive attributes, strengths, and talents (both historical and present). For instance, Spencer focused on his motocross accomplishments and "Mr. Fix-It" mechanical talents, Jade reflected on her musical abilities, and Snickers took pride in her ability to handle a wide range of responsibilities at work. These findings aligned with Bonanno's (2004) claim that such self-enhancement could help buffer stress. Tweed et al. (2012) also echoed the benefits of highlighting and heightening such perceived strengths. While non-substance use related repressive coping (Bonanno, 2004) was less common, Black, Cancerman, and Blue all showed evidence for this. All participants also showed some propensity for positive emotion, be it through laughter or having sought out more positive influences to connect with (Bonanno, 2004).

Spirituality emerged as an important protective factor for nearly all participants. This finding was consistent with previous investigations (Bender et al., 2007; Grabbe et al., 2012; Hodge et al., 2012; Hurlbut et al., 2011; Reutter & Bigattie, 2014; Roche, 2012; Shuler, Gelberg, & Brown, 1994), which identified spirituality as an important protective factor for surviving and thriving in the face of adversity such as interpersonal trauma,

stress, health concerns, and homelessness. Relevant here was Snodgrass' (2013) finding that "one's psychospiritual well-being can serve as a source of support in trying times; however, negative treatment by others, and the stigma of homelessness, can cause one to reflect and question her own spiritual work" (p. 9). While some participants reported a questioning of faith, more reported experiencing a return to faith/spirituality and the benefits of having accessed faith-based networks, a finding supported by Bryant-Davis and Wong (2013). Such findings aligned with Boydell et al.'s (2000) claim that it would be imprudent to ignore such spiritual dimensions when working with individuals who are homeless.

Several participants appeared to cope and derive benefit from their optimistic outlooks and attitudes of gratitude. Optimism refers to "having a strong expectation that, in general, things will turn out all right in life, despite setbacks and frustrations" (Goleman, 1995, p. 88). While some participants, such as Vernon and Scooter, found their optimism wavering in the face of repeat setbacks, most continued to hold an optimistic outlook. Such findings could be related to Boydell et al.'s (2000) insistence on the need to capitalize on individuals' strengths and optimistic outlooks in the early stages of homelessness. Participants' optimistic outlooks might have helped offset the effects of insecure attachment while adjusting to various life and situational transitions (Herrmann, 2008), buffered the impact of traumatic experiences and life stressors (Baldwin, Jackson, Okoh, & Cannon, 2011; Segovia, Moore, Linnville, Hoyt, & Hain, 2012), and enabled some to adopt coping strategies that targeted sources of distress and longer-term gains over short-term fixes (Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986). Meanwhile, the fact that numerous participants chose to focus on things they were grateful for at the shelter and

with life in general appeared to help them avoid negative influences and continue to cope. Such pro-resiliency behaviors aligned with the findings of Vo (2014) around the benefits of gratitude on resilient pathways. Partly on account of their gratitude, several participants commented on their desire to help others and give back in some fashion. Boydell et al. (2000) commonly observed such aspirations as well.

The ability to be present in the here-and-now while also maintaining a constructive, hopeful, goal-centered focus appeared to have served several participants well. Snickers was one such participant who well-exemplified in-the-moment gratitude and mindfulness paired with self-efficacious future aspirations. The benefits of such strategies were supported in the positive psychology literature (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Many participants also made some type of reference that either preserved the good parts of their past, distanced the negative components of their past, or related to a better, future self. The idea of a future self really seemed to maintain participants' motivation and was a helpful identity-based compartmentalization strategy previously observed by Boydell et al. (2000).

Another related identity-based coping strategy utilized but not commented on directly involved the use of the "identity hierarchy" previously observed by Boydell et al. (2000, p. 35). Participants' narratives were ripe with comments or stories that differentiated themselves from others who were homeless whom they perceived to be more negative, less grateful, or generally aligned with many of the negative stereotypes around those who are homeless. As Boydell et al. argued, such efforts might have helped participants maintain a positive sense of self-esteem through distancing themselves from other individuals who were homeless and minimizing their felt distance from individuals

who were not homeless. The possible relevance of this unique coping strategy also aligned with Chamberlain and Johnson's (2013) finding around the beneficial nature of not overly developing a sense of belonging within the community of individuals who are homeless.

Catch-22 of Individual-Level Protective Factors

As both Davis (2014) and McNulty and Fincham (2012) have appropriately cautioned, one must consider seemingly adaptive traits and processes in context as certain coping strategies could become maladaptive across time, context, and application. The rigid application of formerly adaptive behaviors across relationships and contexts might contribute to certain maladaptive, non-resilient behaviors (Bonanno, 2004; Levenson, 1995; Teyber & McClure, 2011). Such patterns were observed for many of the participants in this investigation, particularly as it related to periods where they had an over-reliance on individual-level protective factors and self-sufficiency, self-destructive escape, as well as avoidance and emotional stifling (Nyamathi et al., 2012). As had been identified by Cleverly and Kidd (2011), several participants found that their often adaptive reliance on intrapersonal coping strategies became less helpful in the face of myriad risk factors and the greater adversity they faced upon becoming homeless.

Yet as Brown et al. (2012) alluded to in their description of the braiding process, it is helpful to consider both the adaptive and maladaptive nature of a given behavior. Indeed, the contexts of both adverse relational histories and homelessness seemingly forced a number of participants to behave in some ways that appeared maladaptive on the surface but were actually an initially resilient, adaptive, survival instinct (Barker, 2013; Baxter & Hopper, 1981). Such refrains were consistent with aspects of the

agency/resistance counter-narrative (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). These lines of thought point to the potential value in adopting an empathic stance that allows one to consider the origins of such behaviors and, conversely, as Paradis (2000) opined, failure to do so perpetuated stereotypes and led to ill-informed service provision.

Many, but not all, participants appeared to have developed a relatively stable attachment style and way of coping with and relating to the world that stemmed from the formative context of adverse attachment environments. Consistent with the postulates of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980, 1988), many participants recounted experiences with neglectful and abusive or inconsistent and inflexible caregivers that respectively influenced many of their seemingly avoidant or anxious patterns of attachment. The self-trauma model (Briere, 2002) and notions of cyclical maladaptive patterns (Levenson, 1995) seemingly provided a helpful overlay for understanding the lasting impact of many participants' negative or mixed relational history with caregivers. In accordance with the secure base script (Mikulincer et al., 2009), many participants seemingly learned to decrease/deactivate their attachment behavior strategies and became increasingly self-reliant in the face of repeated letdowns. Rather than risk rejection, the more avoidant participants likely learned to attenuate their needs (Bowlby, 1988; Mikulincer et al., 2009). Such strategies might have served participants well at certain points yet, as Bowlby noted (1973), became increasingly maladaptive when it came time to pursue future relationships or turn to others for support to contend with their homelessness. As found by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), such patterns of avoidance likely pre-empted some participants from gaining exposure to more trustworthy others earlier.

While many participants valued their strong self-reliance, they also commented on their need to overcome their mistrust of others when circumstances forced them to turn to others for support. As Bowlby (1973) described, some participants (Kay, Christina, and Scooter) had to overcome their view of others as untrustworthy and unreliable, whereas others (e.g., Black, B.P., and Blue) had to overcome their own sense of being unworthy. Such a finding added credence to others' (Atwood, 2006; Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Masten, 2007) claims around the intersection of attachment and resiliency as it related to accessing diverse sources of support in the face of adverse circumstances. Yet most participants who struggled with such concerns alluded to being able to "swallow pride," work through feelings of shame around accessing support, and had largely begun to start effectively utilizing available resources. Such a finding was consistent with MacKnee and Mervyn's (2002) findings around critical incidents as well as Lynch et al.'s (2007) findings around the benefits of drawing from multiple and varied protective factors.

Secure Versus Insecure: Which is More Adaptive?

The potentially adaptive nature of a given attachment style and set of internal working models, the unique context and culture of the individual, or the "substantial differences of socialization goals, caretaking strategies, and parent-child behavioral relationships across cultural communities" (Keller, 2013, p. 179) must be borne in mind when considering how attachment dynamics unfold over time. As described above, many of the participants who developed more insecure patterns of attachment, wherein they became more compulsively self-reliant and avoidant or increasingly preoccupied and anxious, had likely been responding adaptively to adverse environments at the time

(Bowlby, 1969). Furthermore as argued by Bowlby (1980), participants' behavior might have been designed to increase affiliation with those they perceived as supportive while distancing themselves from those perceived as threatening; the danger lies in developing IWMs that distort one's perception of reality (e.g., blanket mistrust of others) or residing in environments that genuinely pose a physical or psychological threat. In some ways, the apparently insecure attachment patterns of some participants might have reflected an intuitive fear response to environmentally perceived clues, cultural learning, or literal threat (Bowlby, 1973). Within the population of adults who are homeless, there might be an inherent process of acculturation over time whereby one learns to avoid certain aspects of or individuals within the environment (Bandura, 1997). Several participants mentioned how they had learned to avoid certain people or contexts based on the negative experiences they had had either directly or indirectly. However, this seemingly adaptive boundary setting was often carried out too far, such that several participants closed themselves off from potentially viable supports and resources.

As mentioned in Chapter II, some authors have started challenging the presumed adaptive nature of secure attachment styles when it comes time to respond resiliently to adverse circumstances. Attachment, resiliency, and context were considered here in a more layered, dynamic manner. Like others before (i.e., Fraley & Bonanno, 2004; Mancini & Bonanno, 2009), some of the more avoidant participants had indeed found ways to cope and respond resiliently following various losses in their lifetimes. Similar to the mixed findings between Karreman and Vingerhoets (2011) and Caldwell and Shaver (2012), participants like Cancerman and Snickers who reported more secure attachments in childhood later displayed inconsistent patterns of emotional regulation.

This investigation revealed that when it comes to the relative advantage of secure versus insecure patterns of attachment, it depends. More directly, it answered the question posed within this theme: the adaptive nature of secure versus more insecure attachment styles appeared to depend on the surrounding context and relationships and, therefore, might change over time.

In many ways, Snickers was the only participant who appeared to have held a more consistently secure attachment style, while others such as Vernon reported being more secure at certain points in time and within certain types of relationships. As would have been predicted by Bowlby (1980), the affirming and attuned patterns of relations with which Snickers grew up contributed to her long-standing pattern of being enhanced by social connections. The manner in which Snickers viewed herself, others, and coped with difficulties over the years also appeared consistent with the results of various studies that demonstrated the advantages of secure attachment for promoting resilient responding through emotional intelligence, coping strategies, hardiness, adaptive humor, positive self-esteem, both perceiving as available as well as accessing social support, recovering from trauma, and overall positive mental health and well-being (Besser et al., 2012; Bowlby, 1973; Buelow et al., 2002; Hamarta et al., 2009; Neria et al., 2001; Ognibene & Collins, 1998; Rutten et al., 2013; Svanberg, 1998; Tummala-Narra et al., 2007). Yet at the same time, Snickers and Vernon, with their desire to help others and positive expectations for relationships, appeared to have opened themselves up to have been taken advantage of by peers.

Meanwhile, some of the disadvantages of holding an insecure attachment style, such as the impact on work, relational involvements, and compulsive self-reliance, have

been expounded upon elsewhere and above (Bowlby, 1988; Lyddon et al., 1993; Mikulincer et al., 2009). Thus, it took some of such participants longer to become more receptive and able to access support from others. However, many of these participants were well-adapted to a circumstance that required them to focus more on their own needs. Some participants, such as Spencer and Blue, also alluded to the sheer fact that they had survived through trying circumstances earlier on in life had given them confidence they could make it through their present homelessness. Such a finding lent some credence to the curvilinear relationship noted by Seery et al. (2013) around the potential benefits of having overcome a degree of adversity earlier in life.

Importance of Positive Attachment Ties

While the majority of the discussion so far has related to the various adverse circumstances (including homelessness) participants faced across their lifespan, as well as the positive and maladaptive ways in which they have been responded to, that picture is also incomplete. Indeed, fixed or absolute notions of attachment and allusions to participants struggling against the world in complete isolation would be overstated. So too would notions of exclusively vilifying and blaming parents. Some participants had stories about positive parenting influences that helped counteract some of their negative experiences inside and outside of the home. This finding was consistent with Bowlby's (1988) claim around how the presence of even one positive caregiver relationship or sibling bond could help offset other negative ones.

Much like the findings of both Caron et al. (2012) and DeKlyen et al. (1998), participants here often exhibited varying levels of relationally specific attachments. Different participants reported feeling more securely connected to one caregiver but not

the other, secure with romantic partners but not with family, or secure in certain relationships with peers or trusted adults but not elsewhere. All participants reported at some point having had at least one positive attachment tie either from within or from outside their family who helped engender a sense of connection, hope, self-worth, and self-efficacy; the protective role of these types of connections should not be understated (MacKnee & Mervyn, 2002; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Tavecchio et al., 1999). Or as Bowlby (1973) claimed, “The difference made by presence or absence of a trusted adult cannot be exaggerated” (p. 107).

As Herrman et al. (2011) said, there are plenty of inroads from which diverse protective factors can develop to promote resilience. Thus it was not surprising that participants discussed how they had derived positive benefits from all sorts of positive relational ties. For instance, Dang and Miller (2013) spoke to the important role natural mentors (e.g., grandparents, teachers, coaches, etc.) could play in the absence of a supportive parental relationship, noting that such relationships could be vital for promoting resilient pathways. By simply expanding attachment considerations to include grandparents, teachers, and coaches, all but four of the participants were able to reflect on how such ties had been instrumental in offsetting other hardships and helping them believe in themselves now. As was found by O’Conner and McCartney (2007), Kay, DeBroncos, Christina, and Vernon all spoke to positive connections they found with teacher(s) when such connections were lacking at home.

Findings in this investigation were consistent with previous research (Lightfoot et al., 2011; Zugazaga, 2008) in uncovering the importance of familial and communal-level protective factors for buffering distress related to homelessness. It was important to note

that it was the perception of social support rather than the tangible amount of social support that was relevant in the current study, highlighting the need to challenge literal or perceived social ostracism some participants like Scooter, Vernon, and B.P. reported. Although circles of social support might have diminished somewhat for many participants while homeless, findings here aligned with others who found evidence for the continued, stress-mitigating presence of social support (Bates & Toro, 1999; Toro et al., 2008). Similar to Reitzes et al. (2011), participants here derived a sense of community through patching together various formal and informal sources of support.

While many participants maintained prosocial connections with peers and caring adults who had helped them work their way through developmental and circumstantial challenges (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), most also reported contending with double-edged relationships and periods of isolation that first began at home. Like the findings from one of my pilot studies (Roche, 2012), various participants spoke to having experienced sudden, unexpected, and disrupted changes in caregiver relationships, making it difficult to form a sense of a secure base (Bowlby, 1988). Other participants (such as Kay, Spencer, James, and Vernon) spoke to how they had material needs met but felt they lacked parental warmth. Although some, like DeBroncos and Snickers, derived some benefit from the instrumental parentification (Hooper, 2007) they experienced when in a caregiver role for their parents, others like B.P., Jade, and Black reported having dealt with the detrimental impact of emotional parentification.

About half of the participants reported having presently or previously experienced damaging periods of loneliness and perceived social rejection. Such a finding was consistent with Rokach's (2005) social support comparison between matched, housed

samples and individuals who were homeless. As McWhirter et al. (2002) had found previously, Spencer, Scooter, Blue, and Vernon similarly reported on how they had experienced erosions to their resilience capacity during periods of more extreme isolation and low self-esteem. Although not an explicitly made connection, many participants spoke to having desired and sought out peer and romantic relationships to have some form of connection even when it was not always in their best interest. Like Stablein (2011) observed, such social networks had both helpful and maladaptive elements for several participants. Primary risks noted in some participants' narratives involved relating with peers who regularly got into legal and academic trouble (Tsai et al., 2011) and put them at increased risk for substance abuse (Wenzel et al., 2012). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, several participants had been working hard to disengage from such negative influences and associate with more positive influences.

Indeed, many participants reported on how positive attachment ties across the lifespan had provided them with corrective emotional experiences (Teyber & McClure, 2011) that had allowed them to work to rebuild interpersonal trust. Consistent with findings by Rayburn and Corzine (2010) and Roche (2012), participants (when relevant) spoke to the often positive and motivating influence their romantic partners and child(ren) had on them. Others, like Blue and B.P., spoke to the healing influence of friends and roommates. As others (Clulow, 2007; Hinnen et al., 2009) have previously documented the potential for partnerships in adulthood to improve one's social and emotional intelligence, life satisfaction, and serve as a protective factor, such positive findings were not surprising. Although Bowlby (1988) indicated attachment theory was meant to be a lifespan theory, the fact that many participants experienced healthy shifts in

their relational scripts in the face of positive encounters and other corrective emotional experiences was consistent with more recent thinking (Levenson, 1995; Siegel, 2001; Teyber & McClure, 2011). In addition to benefitting from exposure to positive attachment ties over the lifespan, the majority of participants discussed how they were motivated to make amends, reconcile, or reconnect with family. The fact that those who had made greater strides in this area reported having derived various benefits came as no surprise as such positive effects have been previously documented (Bowlby, 1988; Pickett-Schenk et al., 2007; Zammichieli, 1997).

Importance of Community Response

Jones (2013) stated, “Given the context of the individual in relation to the environment, interaction requires an understanding of the individual’s self-perception, ones’ status within the environment, and the relationships developed within the environment” (p. 54). The fact that many participants were able to elaborate on both the positive and negative aspects of their communities made sense, not only because they were asked directly but also because the broader, environmental context had previously been established as an important component of resiliency (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002). Not only did participants interface with their environments in both direct and indirect ways, so too did the environment interact with them.

A handful of participants, like Kay, B.P., and Snickers, commented on how they were uplifted by the small gestures, random acts of kindness, and resources provided by everyday folks in their community. Lankenau (1999) had observed how affiliating with such community members could help buffer some of the stigma individuals who are homeless face. While not spoken about directly, such a finding generally aligned with

some participants' statements around the positive impact community members could have. Meanwhile, others expressed appreciation for the positive sense of community they derived from places like their church, Alcoholics Anonymous, the library, and their workplaces. Myers et al. (2013) also found that congregations could play a vital role in working with community members who are impoverished or homeless by taking initiatives to become more aware of protective and risk factors, conveying care and support with a realistic eye toward barriers, and recognizing it might take time for some to establish trust. Vernon's and B.P.'s narratives drew attention to the importance of having trust in one's faith community. Myers et al. (2013) also conveyed that congregation members should reach out in light of the detrimental toll that could come with social marginalization and invisibility. Although a heartening sentiment, it did not consistently align with participants' reported experiences.

Many participants commented on the many subtle and not so subtle ways in which they and others who are homeless were frequently demonized, marginalized, or forgotten. Appio, Chambers, and Mao (2013) also discussed how such negative experiences with stereotypes and social stigmatization were unfortunately common. As Fiske (2010) demonstrated through her stereotype content model, those who are homeless are frequently perceived to be low in both warmth and competence dimensions and met with reactions of disgust. In my personal experiences as a researcher, AmeriCorps member, and as a human being, I generally found the opposite to be true. "Negative perceptions of homelessness contribute to deficit models of practice, false notions of homogeneity, and marginalization" (Thomas, Gray, & McGinty, 2012, p. 780).

As noted by Lee et al. (2010), many participants were well aware of stereotypes that came up with the label of being homeless, which were often amplified by the expression of others' implicit and explicit biases toward them. Some participants spoke to how they had to negotiate the backlash of a culture wherein their worth was often equated with their shelter or lack thereof. In some instances, participants' strengths might have been subjugated due to various stressors and the stereotype threat (Steele, 1997) individuals who are homeless often face. Several participants discussed their distaste for when they were stereotyped or impacted by the fundamental attribution error (Myers, 2005). While some participants argued for social justice through more equitable resource distribution, others called for a "more relational concept based on fair access to social goods such as rights, opportunities, power, and self-respect" (Patterson et al., 2012, p. 134). As noted or documented by some participants like Blue, Christina, Vernon, and Scooter, such widespread anti-homelessness rhetoric could systemically impact funding, resources, volunteerism, and the wider public perception and stereotypes regarding those who are homeless (Finley & Diversi, 2010).

Context: Tangible and Relational Resources

As alluded to elsewhere, community-level protective factors such as pro-social peers, teachers, mentors, good schools, and safe neighborhoods are thought to build on resiliency (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002). While some participants (Snickers, DeBroncos, and Vernon) found such community-level protective factors had largely been available to them throughout their lives, others felt such resources had only been intermittently available or not at all. Toro et al. (1991) made the case that communal (e.g., community demographics, available resources, community policies,

housing availability) and more macro-level factors (e.g., laws, funding sources) must be considered in interactive and chronological manners. Participants such as Kay, Spencer, Jade, Black, and Vernon spoke directly to how shifts in context contributed to having struggled with some of those variables. In general, when participants resided in smaller, more rural cities, they seemed to indicate they had less access to prosocial community members; found services to be less accessible, available, and of a lower quality; and were also less likely to mention visible and positive actions from community members.

Maslow (1970) conceptualized that human beings are inherently growth striving and must have a hierarchically-arranged series of needs met (including physiological, safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs) to optimize growth and development. Several participants spoke to the difficulties in trying to meet lower-order needs they encountered, especially when homeless, that they wished others better understood. While most indicated shelter resources were sufficient for meeting basic physiological and safety needs (Maslow, 1970), felt safety was not always a guarantee. Participants like DeBroncos, Cancerman, B.P., Blue, and Vernon reported other, more basic needs were not always met as well.

Lebrun-Harris and colleagues (2013) observed a homelessness status was associated with twice the odds of having unmet health needs and using more emergency-based services; thus, it was not surprising that some participants spoke to their struggles around insufficient access to mental, medical, and other forms of care. A handful of participants spoke to their desire for more readily available and specialized counseling supports that could provide services in accessible locations and during accessible times (Cornes et al., 2014; Staab & Reimers, 2013). Even when services are adequate,

accessible, or reliable, counselors and agencies might need to work to establish themselves as trustworthy, empathic, and able to recognize both needs and strengths (Appio et al., 2013; Kryda & Compton, 2009) in light of prior negative encounters.

Implications

Research and Methodology

Prior to this investigation, very little research that could shed light on different facets of homelessness such as around patterns of strength and vulnerability as well as around factors that might mitigate the length of one's homelessness, had been conducted (APA, 2009). As Hauser et al. (2006) observed, narrative inquiries are particularly well suited for the study of resiliency given their ability to draw on how attitudes, thoughts, and feelings reciprocally interact with the experience of adversity. The present narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) served as a vehicle for examining turning points that had positively or adversely impacted participants' abilities to respond resiliently over time. This particular qualitative methodology was also helpful for filling gaps in prior research, affording participants greater space to articulate their myriad experiences, and allowing threads of stereotype-challenging counter-narratives (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) to emerge. By having been transparent in how I adopted a critical lens and strengths-based focus for this investigation, participants who might have otherwise been less inclined to take part in research might have been drawn out. This particularly methodology, my choice of data collection methods, and my use of self as a research instrument all likely contributed to participants' reflections that their experiences were validating, empowering, and comforting.

In addition to my critical philosophical stance and strengths-based research focus, particular data collection methods proved fruitful. While use of interviews and observational data are common fare in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998), the incorporation of a photo-elicitation project (Ortega-Alcázar & Dyck, 2012) was exciting for many participants with several having thought hard and plotted out what they wanted to capture in advance. The photographs and subsequent interviews were helpful for contextualizing and thickening participants' narratives through the process of triangulation. Donated digital cameras were easy enough to gather although many participants were willing or elected to utilize their own camera phones instead. Other than some slight delays in the sending and receiving of photographs, this adaptation proved effective. All cameras except one were returned and only because the individual who lost it had been robbed. While prior warnings and the interview question that allowed participants to speak to pictures they did not take were useful for discouraging participants from entering dangerous/triggering areas or taking pictures of others' faces, extra points of caution around these matters would have been useful.

As emphasized by Paradis (2000), it was important to reflect on the larger scale impact of doing research in the shelter's community such as the ethical responsibilities around site entrance, ongoing presence, and exit. Whether influenced by my research topic, my prior presence as a researcher at the sites, or my face time and prior connection the settings as a volunteer, my overarching impression was my impact was generally a positive one. While there, it was evident some members in the community spoke about my presence in an enthusiastic sense and community members appeared to have felt valued. At the same time, this degree of transparency and visibility in a relatively intact,

close-knit community made it challenging, if not impossible, to ensure confidentiality (at least within the shelter community itself).

Access to the shelters and participant recruitment (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) was aided by my prior role as a volunteer with one of the shelters and prior research projects I had conducted at both shelters. While those in charge of security were appropriately cautious and responsive at first, my relative fluidity within the shelter increased as I became a more established presence. Recruitment during resident meetings was effective as prospective participants were engaged and tended to ask good questions. Some challenges involved fielding so many interested individuals at once (i.e., 25 total individuals had shown up to the three recruitment meetings I had hosted with a few others having expressed interest after the fact), especially in light of space limitations and saturation considerations. To address this challenge, I adopted a random selection procedure. While egalitarian, some of the potential for maximum variation (Merriam, 1998) might have been lost. A procedural modification was also required in light of the large turnout for recruitment meetings, such that the gathering of demographics data became lumped in as part of the structured interview process. Concerns for participant drop-out was anticipated and appropriately handled through use of an ad hoc waitlist. An unanticipated challenge involved having to negotiate whether or not to maintain a commitment with a selected participant after he/she had missed numerous appointments as I wanted to be respectful of both them and me. Cancerman and Spencer both missed a few scheduled appointment times. As I had no procedure in place for such a situation, I ended up electing to collaborate with both in the end.

While my intended population had been adults who were first time or episodically homeless, I wound up including a few more chronically homeless individuals with my sample (Nooe & Patterson, 2010). The inherent difficulty of cleanly selecting participants was consistent with previous findings (Edidin et al., 2011; Lahman et al., 2013). Participants were self-selecting and chosen through random selection thereafter. Thus, numerous voices and perspectives were missing from this investigation. Indeed, it became clear participation in this project was not for everyone as several prospective participants did not work out. This was particularly challenging when the individuals already had cameras distributed to them, although all cameras were reclaimed from those who had elected to drop out.

One prospective participant withdrew during the recruitment meeting as he began to have an emotional breakdown (it was his first night at the shelter), which required helping him connect with shelter staff for support. A selected individual's participation wound up being precluded due to him being hospitalized for a major surgical procedure. While follow-up on my end was prevented due to various constraints, what little information leaned about him lent further evidence to claims of saturation. One selected participant withdrew early, having experienced some confusion around the concept of a pseudonym and struggling with acute levels of distress and/or mental health concerns. Yet another selected participant ended up withdrawing over concerns about audio recordings and his own heightened emotionality, which surprised him. This situation necessitated a momentary role crossover as I had to encourage him to get connected with counseling resources. Again, what little background information had been gathered further affirmed saturation claims. What was interesting was how insistent this

individual was on wanting to be assured he would obtain a hard copy of the dissertation, which spoke to how much he truly valued his life story and what he had to offer.

Some had expressed (and I agreed) that their time and stories were worth more than the \$30-\$50 they received for participation. While some prospective participants might have been more motivated by the financial incentive, most appeared primarily motivated and benefitted from the chance to help others, have their story heard, and to feel validated. In light of such motivation, I would tend to still argue in favor of PinK-based remuneration (Lahman et al., 2013). In fact, the main challenge here revolved around deliberating about whether or not I should have compensated some participants more up front in light of their precarious shelter standings.

One of the benefits of qualitative approaches is the allowance for procedural flexibility (Merriam, 1998). My involvement with B.P. represented the most extreme form of procedural adjustments but even that was not too severe. After B.P. and I had taken time to build rapport, with him having asked a few questions about my background, he appeared more open and comfortable. Time had been taken to repair a rupture surrounding a miscommunication in scheduling, which prior to my clarification, B.P. had interpreted as having been indicative of a prejudicial attitude toward those who are homeless. Thanking him for his honesty while clarifying my intent, the formal interview process still took significant amounts of time and procedural flexibility to get underway given his uncertainty about commitment in the absence of payment that day. While B.P. had been worried about being perceived as “greedy” over wanting the gift card up front, he argued his story was worth more than the pittance of \$30-50 to begin with; as there was no guarantee he would still be at the shelter at follow-up, he did not want to leave

empty-handed. Other modifications involved B.P. having a friend from the shelter hang out for a portion of the interview and never obtaining a formally recorded photo-elicitation interview due to the excessive length of our initial interview.

In addition to B.P., both Scooter and Spencer required accommodations for having part of their involvement take place outside of the prescribed confidential room in the shelters. All had been forewarned around limits of confidentiality but chose to proceed regardless. Other circumstances that required personal or procedural flexibility on my part included the need to be prepared for no-shows and disruptions in schedules; respond accordingly when participants were too tired, sick, needing breaks, running late, or interrupted; recognize the likelihood of underestimating interview lengths; avoid scheduling too many back-to-back interviews or concurrent participants (i.e., in light of the mutual need for having quick turnarounds and to avoid attrition at follow-up); accommodate for participants' out days, holidays, and chore-related obligations; figure out preferred methods for announcing my arrival to participants and set firm (as opposed to loose) appointment times; field interview-specific, participant-specific, or research-related time constraints (e.g., flipping the order of member and peer checks); and anticipate the need for multiple modalities for communication. Some complications in communication with participants would have been waylaid had I made use of a pre-paid cell phone as my inability to provide a direct number forced me to rely on e-mail or notes left at the shelter, neither of which was always reliable. Some difficulties arose with the member check process when it was discovered some participants' phone numbers no longer worked and they had not responded at the e-mail address they had provided. Such

concerns could have been mitigated by limiting the number of participants I worked with at once, working to be more efficient, and conversing about back-up plans in advance.

As narrative inquiry involves in-depth and highly personal exploration (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), an inherent methodological artifact revolved around my need to balance my role as a researcher with my identity as a counselor. My counseling background facilitated rapport-building, information gathering, appropriately containing emotional expression, and was well-suited to the broad narrative format. This background was also helpful for tracking and supportively redirecting more tangential participants, gauging participants' levels of understanding, and respectfully listening in a non-judgmental manner. While I had to at times refrain from going into "counseling mode," certain circumstances arguably blurred the differentiation of these different roles. For instance, a couple participant disclosures necessitated a follow-up question in light of potential mandated reporting concerns. Neither was warranted but my counseling background was helpful for pursuing the matters.

Upon discovering acute or relatively recent risk factors such as when one participant reported prior passive suicidal ideation without giving any indication of present ideation, I had to consider whether or not to assess the situation further. This encounter reinforced the need to know how to appropriately utilize shelter staff (e.g., case managers), be aware of their resources/procedures for assisting residents in such circumstances, and be familiar with area counseling referrals (which were recommended). The maintenance of personal boundaries was also relevant here whether it was running into Cancerman at the DMV, Spencer insinuating that we meet up for coffee at some point in the future, B.P. wanting to drive together to pick up his gift card,

and the difficulty of creating closure in light of the extent of involvement and participant disclosure.

A final methodological and research-related implication revolved around my need to have bridled (Dahlberg, 2006) my biases throughout the entirety of the research process. What Patton (2002) referred to was the ongoing reflection on what I know and how I know it. By presenting myself up front to prospective participants as a researcher interested in resiliency and challenging stereotypes, self-selection and presentational biases were certainly possible. At the same time, participants' narratives were very balanced, having drawn attention to both strengths and challenges. In fact, many participants noted my transparency up front helped them feel more comfortable and trusting, and thus more forthcoming in their interviews. As I worked with different participants, I had to bridle possible biases around artificially injecting a theoretical overlay onto the material presented, unduly influencing the research process through use of reframes and supportive redirection, and balancing my exploration of both strengths as well as struggles when relevant.

Theoretical

By and large, there is a need for the application of psychological constructs to homelessness (APA, 2009). Kennedy et al. (2010) found interventions for those who are homeless often lacked theoretical and empirical grounding--a shortcoming they argued could be overcome by incorporating a risk and resiliency analysis over the life course. My consideration of how protective/risk factors, including attachment dynamics, emerged across the contextualized narratives of those who are homeless aligned nicely with trauma, ecological, and risk amplification models (Goodman et al., 1991; Toro et al.,

1991; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999, respectively). By considering the role of early and lifespan risk/protective factors across contexts, this investigation aspired to stay on point with more contemporary and emergent thinking on homelessness.

Theoretically and empirically-consistent pathways and risk factors for homelessness (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2013; Larkin & Park, 2012; Torchalla et al., 2012) were identified in this investigation. Several participants reported struggling with the impact of childhood poverty and instability, adverse childhood experiences, relational disruptions, the development of insecure attachment patterns (for most), later developing some poor coping strategies, and later substance use and other mental health concerns. At the same time, such experiences were not universally true nor was the intention of this inquiry to merely examine what puts one at risk or predisposes them to homelessness. Additionally, I wanted to showcase what was right, afford space for stereotype-challenging counter-narrative to emerge (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010), highlight how participants had coped and bounced back, and elucidate what diverse forms of support could be drawn from historically or presently.

As Herrman et al. (2011) observed, by gathering a good history across the lifespan, one can elucidate how points of prevention and intervention could occur at any point to reduce or ameliorate the impact of stressors. Narrative analysis here revealed participants drew from a preponderance of individual, familial, and communal-level protective factors (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Many participants drew heavily from individual-level protective factors consistent with the burgeoning field of positive psychology with traits such as “optimism, courage, work ethic, future-mindedness, interpersonal skill, the capacity for pleasure and insight, and social responsibility”

(Seligman, 1999, p. 559). Consistent with Bonanno's (2004) conceptualization of resiliency as a process of acclimation in the face of adversity, participants drew from different protective factors across different situations to help adjust when they were most successful. The fact that participants had persevered in the face of myriad setbacks, relational disruptions, and structural barriers was not altogether surprising, yet it was important to highlight. As has been discovered, resilient pathways are far more common than what had been initially imagined (Bonanno, 2004; Masten, 2001).

Further support was provided for postulations that both attachment and resiliency should be considered complementary theories (Atwool, 2006; Masten, 2007), with attachment dynamics providing a clearer understanding of how resiliency could unfold over time, and that such considerations were relevant for research on homelessness. For instance and as was found here, Atwool (2006) theorized that secure attachment in adulthood might allow one to reach out to as opposed to avoid or alienate one's social support. Exploration helped allow for more empathic perspective on insecure attachment and subsequent maladaptive coping strategies to emerge. It was also revealed that many of these participant behaviors were contextually appropriate and adaptive in many ways. At the same time, the ability of many seemingly insecure participants to grow, change, and learn to draw from familial and communal supports over time was consistent with more contemporary thinking on attachment theory (Levenson, 1995; Ludolph & Bow, 2012; Teyber & McClure, 2011).

Through this research, I helped fill some of the gaps related to the limited focus on homelessness and the process of adult resiliency since many researchers have focused on the resiliency process of children and adolescents (e.g., Neiman, 1988). Additionally,

this investigation deepened the exploration of homelessness as it related explicitly to attachment dynamics over time (APA, 2009). This investigation was not only unique with regard to what was researched and what was found but also with regard to how research questions were pursued. The application of a critical framework and unique methods of data collection allowed for many threads of counter-narrative elements to be highlighted in participants' narratives (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). Among such counter-narrative elements was many participants' ability to identify and challenge more structural and systemic barriers, although many were quick to heap lots of accountability unto themselves. This investigation also showcased the myriad, individualized ways of coping enacted by participants and how many had to work hard to overcome their over-reliance on individual-level coping strategies in the face of such a seemingly daunting affront as homelessness. The "unbraiding" process granted in this investigation (Brown et al., 2012) demonstrated both the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of different attachment styles in the context of both adverse childhood experiences and homelessness (Fraley & Bonanno, 2004; Mancini & Bonanno, 2009). Lastly, the need for idiographic and systemic levels of awareness was noted as participants did not fit a single mold.

Implications for Counseling Psychologists and Relevant Stakeholders

The nine cross-narrative themes identified in this investigation could be directly applied to the practice of counseling psychologists and others who work with the population of adults who are homeless. Specifically, providers are advised to recognize and empathize with the fact that there are multiple, additive, and sometimes unexpected pathways to homelessness. Furthermore, the entry into and experience of homelessness can often be traumatic, temporarily disorienting, and at times scary; this finding pointed

to the need to not only provide information regarding resources but to also provide a sense of safety and stability.

It is important for mental health providers to be mindful of and prepared to work through myriad forms of adversity likely encountered by those who have experienced homelessness while also recognizing the many ways in which resiliency has been enacted over time. Toward this end, fostering and enhancing coping skills, such as those (e.g., spirituality, attitude of gratitude, identity hierarchy) successfully utilized by these participants, could help better prepare individuals for dealing with homelessness and to work toward re-establishing housing stability. At the same time, providers would be wise to recognize the potential catch-22 of individual coping strategies such as when extreme self-reliance prevents one from being able to take advantage of functional and relational resources. It is essential for counseling psychologists to take individuals' attachment style dynamics into account as both might play out in adaptive and maladaptive ways depending on the context.

In light of the finding that positive attachment ties had myriad buffering and corrective benefits and knowing that many individuals who are homeless might experience a lack of such ties, it is imperative to help such individuals rebuild positive ties and assist them in developing support networks. Relatedly, knowing the benefits derived from prosocial support in the community is important for counseling psychologists and affiliated allies to help connect individuals with positive community members while advocating for larger-scale attitudinal change toward those who are homeless. Findings related to the community might be especially important for providers

working in more rural or resource-deficient areas as individuals might experience greater difficulty accessing adequate care and connection.

The cross-narrative themes that emerged in this study are critical for counseling psychologists and relevant stakeholders to consider when working with those who are formerly homeless, currently homeless, or at-risk for homelessness. As such, a client's housing status should be part of a routine inquiry. Moreover, mental health providers should be on the lookout for and respond accordingly to the factors related and contributing to homelessness that were identified in Table 3.

Results have illustrated possible inroads for homelessness prevention and intervention work (e.g., advocacy around structural inequalities, working through complex feelings of shame, grief, and mistrust), highlighted strengths and protective factors that could be drawn on clinically, and developed a more layered and contextualized understanding of pathways into and current experiences of homelessness. Ultimately, participants' counter-narratives could be used to help advocate, educate the public and the profession, and challenge implicit attitudes. If certain protective factors could be enhanced and resilient pathways could be fostered, positive adaptation might appear in the form of increased social competence, behavioral success at varying developing mental tasks, and so forth. Common approaches to enhancing resiliency potential involve the reduction of risks, the increase of resources, and a process-focused approach (i.e., focusing on matters of attachment, self-regulation, and self-efficacy; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). As encouraged by the APA (2009) and Bronfenbrenner (1979), providers would be wise to expand their conceptual lens beyond the micro-level,

which appeared relevant here as presently and over the life course participants drew strength from or struggled with larger systems of influence.

Results of this investigation also pointed to the possible role of research as intervention and/or the application of narrative approaches to counseling with individuals and communities who are homeless. This type of research and/or approach to counseling could provide those who are homeless the chance to look at and challenge dominant narratives (White & Epston, 1990), deal with feelings of internalized oppression, and potentially develop a greater critical consciousness (Godfrey & Wolf, 2015). The utility of a narrative approach makes greater sense when one considers how participants here had narratives marked by elements of strength, achievement, and positive connection; indeed, they were not just the narratives of someone who needs “fixing.” As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) said, “Experience is the stories people live. People live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others” (p. xxvi).

Interventions with individuals who are homeless must take into account possible adverse traumas, insecure patterns of relatedness, and be attuned to social support dynamics. As noted by Rodell et al. (2003), many interventions fail by not attending to the “adverse feelings that stem from early experiences in childhood that may impede efforts to overcome addiction and engage in employment” (p. 70). To draw on strengths, Rodell et al. suggested individuals who are homeless might benefit from “learning how to express feelings and thoughts openly and to develop trust in others and to feel secure with them” (p. 70). In light of the findings around how the accumulation of adverse childhood experiences contributed to earlier entry into homelessness and greater levels of substance

use (Tsai et al., 2011), this finding pointed to the need to target such experiences as a point of intervention with trauma-informed care (Herman, 1997; McKenzie-Mohr et al., 2011). Many participants also appeared to have been contending with matters related to complex grief (recent or long-standing) they might benefit from being addressed. This also pointed to the potentially unique role of interpersonal approaches to counseling with their explicit focus on matters of grief/loss, role transitions, interpersonal disputes, and interpersonal deficits, and how they might be particularly well-suited for clinical interventions with this population (Klerman, Weissman, Rounsaville, & Chevron, 1984; Teyber & McClure, 2011).

Vasquez (2012) identified poverty and homelessness as particular areas of concern since one in five U.S. children are currently impoverished with half a million homeless overall. Since theories surrounding social justice are intimately connected with human rights--the right to basic needs, a decent standard of living, education, and medical attention, counseling psychologists ought to aspire to improve public policy and thereby others' daily living, be willing and able to engage others in difficult conversations, and to always remember that doing nothing *is* taking action (Vasquez, 2012). Being able to work competently with those who are homeless, in poverty, or from varying socioeconomic social classes is an essential component of multicultural competence (APA, 2003; Staab & Reimers, 2013). Appio et al. (2013) observed a need to address the experience of those in therapy who are impoverished and/or homeless as it relates to differences in social class, financial concerns, shaming potential, the impact of internalized classism, as well as the need to develop trust, address concrete concerns, and be willing to explore relevant strengths and resources. For instance, in light of the

prevalence of participants' spiritual protective factors and the claims of Brelsford and Ciarrocchi (2013) around resiliency-enhancing benefits of having clients talk about their spiritual beliefs, there is a need for counselors to develop greater spiritual competency.

In 1984, Lamb (1984) concluded, "Most mental health professionals are disinclined to treat 'street people' or 'transients'" (p. 900) even though it is a much needed specialization. Although many psychologists might dedicate their energy in the service of other underserved populations, APA's (2009) finding around psychologists' insufficient involvement with the population of individuals who are homeless suggested Lamb's finding is still relevant today.

I unfortunately have to agree with Geller's (2000) pessimistic stance that the disinclination to work with those who are homeless in the wake of the deinstitutionalization movement has turned the "prisoners of psychiatry" into the "prisoners without psychology" (p. 1397). I believe psychology has the responsibility to ameliorate injustice, not only within our field but also within society (APA, 2009). Additionally, while recent housing first initiatives (Poremski et al., 2015) have shown some promise, the APA (2009), "Providing housing without addressing the psychosocial factors that influence homelessness is insufficient to remediate the problem" (p. 29).

As leaders in the community with specialized knowledge bases and skillsets, counseling psychologists are uniquely positioned to provide public education that challenges media portrayals and stereotypes, improves public perceptions, and improves service delivery. For example, counselors could help improve service delivery at homeless shelters by providing staff with psychoeducational training regarding the impact of trauma, mental health concerns, anger management, and self-care (Burke,

2005). Psychologists could also collaborate with homeless service agencies to construct mutually beneficial relationships wherein brief assessments, research, consultation, and counseling interventions could assist shelter clients and counseling trainees alike (Rogers et al., 2012). Essentially, there is a need for consultation, outreach, and therapy with these groups and relevant service agencies. Hocking and Lawrence (2000) pointed to the benefits of learning: “Homeless individuals are not different from us in any fundamental way and that they have thoughts, self-esteem, hopes, sadness, and all other human emotions that we have, our attitudes and behaviors toward these individuals may change” (p. 110).

On a final note, many counseling psychologists have begun and must continue to take a hard look at what one can do to challenge his/her own stereotypes about individuals and families who are homeless as well as to become an ally for combatting their stigmatization (Staab & Reimers, 2013). Batson et al. (1997) demonstrated experimentally that feeling and developing empathy for individuals who are homeless could lead to sustained feelings of empathy and attitude change. This is not a new concept. Proponents of person-centered therapy (Rogers, 1961) have been advocating for empathy for over half a century. Lastly, the positive attitude change that results from taking the time to truly interact with individuals who are homeless is difficult to place a value on in terms of direct service, stigma reduction, and personal growth (Hocking & Lawrence, 2000). Again, it is always a person in a situation but the person is who always comes first. Given the powerfully damaging effects of stigma experienced by individuals who are homeless (Kidd, 2007), it comes as no surprise that many of them would be reticent to open up to others about their situation and feelings, let alone to some type of

outreach worker or counselor who is purporting to wanting to assist them. After all, why should they expect to be treated any differently? Such findings related to why Poremski et al. (2015) spoke to the importance of developing a trusting therapeutic relationship.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

Within this investigation, a number of inherent assumptions might have impacted my ability to carry out this inquiry to its fullest. An initial assumption related to gaining permission from gatekeepers to collaborate with participants at different homeless/transitional shelters and also that once at the various shelters, individuals would have been interested in sharing their narratives and collaborating over an extended period of time. While access was granted and many individuals expressed interest in participating, it is unknown what the narratives of those who dropped out or did not self-select to participate might have looked like. Other assumptions related to my methods of data collection allowing for variability in narratives, contextual differences, and chronological factors to emerge. Further, investigations that make use of retrospective recall might lack some of the experiential accuracy longitudinal examinations could afford. A final set of assumptions involved my espoused belief that participants would be actively trying to resist their situation, were capable of reflecting on their experiences, and that I, as the primary research instrument, would be able to build sufficient rapport to allow for accurate narrative recall. All of these assumptions appeared to have been met.

Possible limitations related to engaging with too many participants in too short a time while gathering too much data. The breadth and depth of the data gathered herein proved challenging to synthesize and present in a digestible manner. Even the participants struggled at times with narrowing their photos. Another potential limitation

involved the fact that it was difficult to truly gauge each participant's level of understanding of intended instructions (i.e., structured interview questions and with photo-elicitation project), yet certainly subject to interpretation was fine and might tap into unique aspects of participants' experience and perceptions. Certainly there was also the potential for a seasonal impact as it related to influencing participants' present mood-state, quality of connections, and the nature of their photo-elicitation project. Lastly, time constraints and delays in communication likely contributed to participant drop-off with the member checking process.

Future Directions for Counseling Psychologists

In light of the potential limits of retrospective recall, future directions might incorporate more longitudinal examinations that follow participants prior to, during, and following their experiences of homelessness. There is also a need for approaching this population and the constructs of interest through mixed methods designs to obtain both nomothetic and idiographic levels of understanding. Certainly there is a need to expand the present investigation to sub-populations among those who are homeless including non-English speaking immigrants, veterans, children and adolescents, various intersecting minority groups, and those who have recently exited a violent situation. Future explorations might further delve into dynamics of attachment style, emotional regulation, resiliency, exposure to trauma, and differential pathways between resilient responding, sustained pathological responding, and posttraumatic growth (Brown et al., 2012; Fraley & Bonanno, 2004; Mancini & Bonanno, 2009; Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012). Parceling out parent, caregiver, and community competencies that foster prosocial development and adaptive attachment over time might prove useful. Westaby, Pfaff, and

Redding (2014) offered an intriguing direction to turn for mapping out social networks. Based on the conflicting conceptualizations found here, it might be helpful to utilize structural equation modeling to quantitatively examine more closely the adaptive and maladaptive nature of secure versus insecure attachment in this population. Lastly, in what has been dubbed the third and fourth wave of resiliency (Masten, 2007), this topic could be more specifically examined with regard to how it could better inform outreach, groups, counseling interventions, and generally relate to matters of neural-plasticity (Charney, 2004; Perry & Szalavitz, 2006).

Conclusion

Much like Freire (1972), I hold the overarching goal of seeing the humanization and equitable treatment of oppressed and marginalized groups. When considering my research area of interest of individuals and families who are homeless, the critical paradigm and critical inquiry approaches were highly relevant as individuals who are homeless are often disproportionately from minority groups (e.g., racial/ethnic, LGBT, disability; Main, 1998; Moxley et al., 2012), relegated to displaced positions within communities (Harter et al., 2005), and stigmatized based on ascribed characteristics (Fiske et al., 2002). Individuals, research, the media, and sociocultural images often perpetuate such stigmatizing portrayals, all of which might come to be introjected by individuals who are homeless.

Thus, one of my aims in having adopted a critical stance in my research was to highlight the humanity and strength of people who are homeless and dispel misconceptions (e.g., working from more systemic as opposed to attributional lenses; Main, 1998) through my research. By providing the individuals involved in the research

with a small means of having a voice through the inclusion of direct quotations and member checking, I strove to empower the participants in what has otherwise predominantly been a culture of silence (Freire, 1972). Also, by having engaged in responsive and reflexive research (Lahman et al., 2011), I strove to more authentically represent the voices of marginalized and disempowered individuals who are homeless to cause individual (e.g., prejudicial/attributional) and meso-systemic (e.g., influence shelter policy and better inform counseling approaches) changes in particular. It is my hope the counter-narratives presented herein (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) will serve as a means of challenging the hegemonic discourse that oppresses many, encourage broader social action through recognizing the rights of those who are homeless, and ultimately help contribute to a more inclusive society (Grabe & Dutt, 2015; NCH, 2013). In honor of these aims, I end with an insightful, complex, as well as simultaneously challenging and aspirational quote from Blue:

It's the people that are in the most trouble that, you know, maybe you help the right person and it could change their life around. Maybe they're like that because you're like that.... Maybe they're like that because that's how the whole world is.

REFERENCES

- Ali, A., & Lees, K. E. (2013). The therapist as advocate: Anti-oppression advocacy in psychological practice. *Journal of Clinical Psychology: In Session*, 69, 162-171.
doi:10.1002/jclp.21955
- Allen, L. (2009). “Snapped”: Researching the sexual culture of schools using visual methods. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22, 549-561.
doi:10.1080/09518390903051523
- American Psychological Association. (2002). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American Psychologist*, 57, 1060–1073.
doi:10.1037/0003-066X.57.12.1060
- American Psychological Association. (2003). Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists. *American Psychologist*, 58, 377-402. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.58.5.377
- American Psychological Association. (2009). Helping people without homes: The role of psychologists and recommendations to advance research, training, practice, and policy. *Report of the APA Presidential Task Force on Psychology’s Contribution to End Homelessness*. Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychological Association Council of Representatives. (1991). Resolution on homelessness. *American Psychologist*, 46, 1108.
doi:10.1037/0003-066X.46.11.1108

- Appio, L., Chambers, D., & Mao, S. (2013). Listening to the voices of the poor and disrupting the silence about class issues in psychotherapy. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 69*, 152-161. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.58.5.377
- Arangua, L., Andersen, R., & Gelberg, L. (2005). The health circumstances of homeless women in the United States. *International Journal of Mental Health, 34*, 62-92.
- Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). The inventory of parent and peer attachment: Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 16*, 427-454.
doi:10.1007/BF02202939
- Armsden, G. C., McCauley, E., Greenberg, M. T., Burke, P. M., & Mitchell, J. R. (1990). Parent and peer attachment in early adolescent depression. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 18*, 683-697. doi:10.1007/BF01342754
- Atwool, N. (2006). Attachment and resilience: Implications for children in care. *Child Care in Practice, 12*, 315-330. doi:10.1080/13575270600863226
- Baldwin, D. R., Jackson III, D., Okoh, I., & Cannon, R. L. (2011). Resiliency and optimism: An African American senior citizen's perspective. *The Journal of Black Psychology, 37*, 24-41. doi:10.1177/0095798410364394
- Bancroft, K. H. (2012). Zones of exclusion: Urban spatial policies, social justice, and social services. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare, 39*, 63-84.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman and Co.
- Barker, J. D. (2013). Negative cultural capital and homeless young people. *Journal of Youth Studies, 16*, 358-374. doi: 10.1080/13676261.2012.718434

- Barnett, J. E. (2012). Clinical writing about clients: Is informed consent sufficient? *Psychotherapy, 49*, 12-15. doi:10.1037/a0025249
- Barnett, M. A., Quackenbush, S. W., & Pierce, L. K. (1997). Perceptions of and reactions to the homeless: A survey of fourth-grade, high school, and college students in a small Midwestern community. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless, 6*, 283-301. doi:10.1007/BF02938597
- Bartholomew, K., & Horowitz, L. M. (1991). Attachment styles among young adults: A test of a four-category model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 61*, 226-244. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.61.2.226
- Bates, D. S., & Toro, P. A. (1999). Developing measures to assess social support among homeless and poor people. *Journal of Community Psychology, 27*, 137-156. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1520-6629(199903)27:2<137::AID-JCOP3>3.0.CO;2-B
- Batson, D., Polycarpou, M. P., Harmon-Jones, E., Imhoff, H. J., Mitchener, E. C., Bednar, L. L., ...Highberger, L. (1997). Empathy and attitudes: Can feeling for a member of a stigmatized group improve feelings toward the group? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72*, 105-118. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.72.1.105
- Baumrind, D. (1968). Authoritarian vs. authoritative parental control. *Adolescence, 3*, 255-272.
- Baxter, E., & Hopper, K. (1981). *Private lives/public spaces: Homeless adults on the streets of New York City*. New York, NY: Community Service Society.
- Belcher, J. R. (1987). The homeless mentally ill: Barriers to effective service delivery. *Journal of Applied Social Sciences, 12*, 62-77.

- Belcher, J. R. (1988a). Defining the service needs of homeless mentally ill persons. *Hospital and Community Psychiatry, 39*, 1203-1205.
- Belcher, J. R. (1988b). Rights versus needs of homeless mentally ill persons. *Social Work, 33*, 398-402.
- Belcher, J. R. (1991). Moving into homelessness after psychiatric hospitalization. *Journal of Social Service Research, 14*, 63-77. doi:10.1300/J079v14n03_04
- Belcher, J. R., Scholler, J., & Drummond, M. (1991). Three stages of homelessness: A conceptual model for social workers in health care. *Health and Social Work, 16*, 87-93.
- Benda, B. B. (2001). Test of a structural equation model of comorbidity among homeless and domiciled military veterans. *Journal of Social Service Research, 29*, 1-35. doi:10.1300/J079v29n01_01
- Bender, K., Thompson, S. J., McManus, H., Lantry, J., & Flynn, P. M. (2007). Capacity for survival: Exploring strengths of homeless street youth. *Child Youth Care Forum, 36*, 25-42. doi:10.1007/s10566-006-9029-4
- Bergeron, B. S. (2008). Enacting a culturally responsive curriculum in a novice teacher's classroom: Encountering disequilibrium. *Urban Education, 43*, 4-28. doi:10.1177/0042085907309208
- Berk, L. E. (2011). *Exploring lifespan development* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

- Berman, L. R., Snow, R. C., Moorman, J.D., Policicchio, D., Geronimus, A. T., & Padilla, M. B. (2015). Parental loss and residential instability: The impact on young women from low-income households in Detroit. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 24, 416-426. doi:10.1007/s10826-013-9852-9
- Besser, A., Luyten, P., & Mayes, L. C. (2012). Adult attachment and distress: The mediating role of humor styles. *Individual Differences Research*, 10, 153-164.
- Blaska, J. (1993). The power of language: Speak and write using “person” first. In M. Nagler (Ed.), *Perspectives on disability* (2nd ed., pp. 25-32). Palo Alto, CA: Health Markets Research.
- Bloom, L. R. (2002). From self to society: Reflections on the power of narrative inquiry. In S. B. Merriam (Ed.), *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (pp. 310-313). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? *American Psychologist*, 59, 20-28. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.59.1.20
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 2. Separation: Anxiety and anger*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1977). The making and breaking of affectional bonds: I. Aetiology and psychopathology in the light of attachment theory. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 130, 201-210. doi:10.1192/bjp.130.3.201

- Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 3. Loss: Sadness and depression*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Boydell, K. M., Goering, P., & Morrell-Bellai, T. L. (2000). Narratives of identity: Representation of self in people who are homeless. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10, 26-38. doi:10.1177/104973200129118228
- Brelsford, G. M., & Ciarrocchi, J. (2013). Spiritual disclosure and ego resiliency: Validating spiritual competencies. *Counseling and Values*, 58, 130-141. doi:10.1002/j.2161-007X.2013.00029.x
- Bretherton, I. (1990). Communication patterns, internal working models, and the intergenerational transmission of attachment relationships. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 11, 237-252. doi:10.1002/1097-0355(199023)11:3<237::AID-IMHJ2280110306>3.0.CO;2-X
- Bretherton, I. (1996). Internal working models of attachment relationships as related to resilient coping. In G. G. Noam & K. W. Fischer (Eds.), *Development and vulnerability in close relationships* (pp. 3-27). Mahaw, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.
- Briere, J. (2002). Treating adult survivors of severe childhood abuse and neglect: Further development of an integrative model. In J. E. B. Myers, L. Berliner, J. Briere, C. T. Hendrix, T. Reid, & C. Jenny (Eds.), *The APSAC handbook on child maltreatment* (2nd ed., pp. 175-202). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Boston, MA: The President and Fellows of Harvard College.

- Brown, N. R., Kallivayalil, D., Mendelsohn, M., & Harvey, M. R. (2012). Working the double edge: Unbraiding pathology and resiliency in the narratives of early-recovery trauma survivors. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 4, 102-111. doi:10.1037/a0024969
- Brubaker, M. D., Garrett, M. T., Rivera, E. T., & Tate, K. A. (2010). Justice making in groups for homeless adults: The emancipatory communitarian way. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 35, 124-133. doi:10.1080/01933921003705982
- Bryant-Davis, T., & Wong, E. C. (2013). Faith to move mountains: Religious coping, spirituality, and interpersonal trauma recovery. *American Psychologist*, 68, 675-684. doi:10.1037/a0034380
- Bryck, R. L., & Fisher, P. A. (2012). Training the brain: Practical applications of neural plasticity from the intersection of cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology, and prevention science. *American Psychologist*, 67, 87-100. doi:10.1037/a0024657
- Buelow, S. A., Lyddon, W. J., & Johnson, J. T. (2002). Client attachment and coping resources. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 15, 145-152. doi:10.1080/09515070110103773
- Bufkin, J. L., & Bray, J. (1998). Domestic violence, criminal justice responses and homelessness: Finding the connection and addressing the problem. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 7, 227-240.
- Bukowski, K., & Buetow, S. (2011). Making the invisible visible: A Photovoice exploration of homeless women's health and lives in central Auckland. *Social Science & Medicine*, 72, 739-746. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.11.029

- Burke, J. (2005). Educating the staff at a homeless shelter about mental illness and anger management. *Journal of Community Health Nursing*, 22, 65-76.
doi:10.1207/s15327655jchn2202_1
- Caldwell, J. G., & Shaver, P. R. (2012). Exploring the cognitive-emotional pathways between adult attachment and ego-resiliency. *Individual Differences Research*, 10, 141-152.
- Calsyn, R. J., & Morse, G. A. (1992). Predicting psychiatric symptoms among homeless people. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 28, 385-395.
doi:10.1007/BF00761057
- Caron, A., Lafontaine, M., Bureau, J., Levesque, C., & Johnson, S. M. (2012). Comparisons of close relationships: An evaluation of relationship quality and patterns of attachment to parents, friends, and romantic partners in young adults. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 44, 245-256. doi:10.1037/a0028013
- Cashdan, S. (1988). *Object relations therapy: Using the relationship*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Cassidy, J., Lichtenstein-Phelps, J., Sibrava, N. J., Thomas Jr., C. L., & Borkovec, T. D. (2009). Generalized anxiety disorder: Connections with self-reported attachment. *Behavior Therapy*, 40, 23-38. doi:10.1016/j.beth.2007.12.004
- Chafel, J., & Neitzel, C. (2005). Young children's ideas about the nature, causes, justification, and alleviation of poverty. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 20, 433-450. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2005.10.004
- Chamberlain, C., & Johnson, G. (2013). Pathways into adult homelessness. *Journal of Sociology*, 49, 60-77. doi:10.1177/1440783311422458

- Chambers, C., Chiu, S., Scott, A. N., Tolomiczenko, G., Redelmeier, D. A., Levinson, W., & Hwang, S. W. (2013). Factors associated with poor mental health status among homeless women with and without dependent children. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 50(5), 553-559. doi:10.1007/s10597-013-9605-7
- Charney, D. S. (2004). Psychobiological mechanisms of resilience and vulnerability: Implications for successful adaptation to extreme stress. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 161, 195-216. doi:10.1176/appi.ajp.161.2.195
- Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 651-680). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry: A methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27, 44-54.
doi: 10.1177/1321103X060270010301
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clapham, D. (2003). Pathways approaches to homelessness research. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 13, 119-127. doi:10.1002/casp.717
- Clark-Ibanez, M. (2004). Framing the social world with photo-elicitation interviews. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 47, 1507-1527. doi:10.1177/0002764204266236
- Cleverly, K., & Kidd, S. A. (2011). Resilience and suicidality among homeless youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, 34, 1049-1054. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2010.11.003
- Clulow, C. (2007). Marriage, partnership, and adult attachment. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 22, 291-294. doi:10.1080/14681990701499674

- Cockersell, P. (2011). Homelessness and mental health: Adding clinical mental health interventions to existing social ones can greatly enhance positive outcomes. *Journal of Public Mental Health, 10*, 88-98. doi: 10.1108/17465721111154284
- Coleman, S., & Wilson, R. (1991). Psychiatric and social characteristics of homeless hostel residents in Northern Ireland. *The Irish Journal of Psychology, 12*, 316-324. doi:10.1080/03033910.1991.10557847
- Cook, W. L. (2000). Understanding attachment security in family context. *Journal of Personality and Psychology, 78*, 285-294. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.78.2.285
- Cooper, M. L., Shaver, P. R., & Collins, N. L. (1998). Attachment styles, emotion regulation, and adjustment in adolescence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74*, 1380-1397. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.74.5.1380
- Cornes, M., Manthorpe, J., Joly, L. & O'Halloran, S. (2014). Reconciling recovery, personalization and housing first: Integrating practice and outcome in the field of multiple exclusion homelessness. *Health and Social Care in the Community, 22*, 134-143. doi:10.1111/hsc.12067
- Cosner Berzin, S., & De Marco, A. C. (2010). Understanding the impact of poverty on critical events in emerging adulthood. *Youth Society, 42*, 278-300. doi:10.1177/0044118X09351909
- Coyl, D. D., Newland, L. A., & Freeman, H. (2010). Predicting preschoolers' attachment security from parenting behaviours, parents' attachment relationships and their use of social support. *Early Child Development and Care, 180*, 499-512. doi:10.1080/03004430802090463

- Cozzarelli, C., Wilkinson, A., & Tagler, M. (2001). Attitudes toward the poor and attributions for poverty. *Journal of Social Issues, 57*, 207-227.
doi:10.1111/0022-4537.00209
- Craig, T. W. (1992). Out of the wards and onto the streets? Deinstitutionalization and homelessness in Britain. *Journal of Mental Health, 1*, 265-275.
doi:10.3109/09638239209005459
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design. Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Croghan, R., Griffin, C., Hunter, J., & Phoenix, A. (2008). Young people's construction of self: Notes on the use and analysis of the photo-elicitation process. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 11*, 345-356.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research. Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crowell, J. A., & Feldman, S. S. (1988). Mothers' internal models of relationships and children's behavioral and developmental status: A study of mother-child interaction. *Child Development, 59*, 1273-1285. doi:10.2307/1130490
- Crowell, J. A., & Owens, G. (1996). *Current relationship interview and scoring system*. Unpublished manuscript, State University of New York at Stony Brook.
- Dahlberg, K. (2006). The essence of essences--the search for meaning structures in phenomenological analysis of lifeworld phenomena. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being, 1*, 11-19.
doi:10.1080/17482620500478405

- Dang, M. T., & Miller, E. (2013). Characteristics of natural mentoring relationships from the perspective of homeless youth. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 26, 246-253. doi:10.1111/jcap.12038
- Dashora, P., Erdem, G., & Slesnick, N. (2011). Better to bend than to break: Coping strategies utilized by substance-abusing homeless youth. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 16, 158-168. doi:10.1177/1359105310378385
- Davila, J. (2001). Refining the association between excessive reassurance seeking and depressive symptoms: The role of related interpersonal constructs. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 20, 538-559. doi:10.1521/jscp.20.4.538.22394
- Davis, L. E. (2014). Have we gone too far with resiliency? *Social Work Research*, 38, 5-6. doi:10.1093/swr/svu003
- DeForge, B. R., Belcher, J. R., O'Rourke, M., & Lindsey, M. A. (2008). Personal resources and homelessness in early life: Predictors of depression in consumers of homeless multiservice centers. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 13, 222-242. doi:10.1080/15325020701769105
- DeKlyen, M., Speltz, M. L., & Greenberg, M. T. (1998). Fathering and early onset conduct problems: Positive and negative parenting, father-son attachment, and the marital context. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 1, 3-21.
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Dickson-Swift, V., James, E. L., Kippen, S., & Liamputtong, P. (2007). Doing sensitive research: What challenges do qualitative researchers face? *Qualitative Research*, 7, 327-353. doi:10.1177/1468794107078515
- Dimsdale, J. E., Mills, P., Patterson, T., Ziegler, M., & Dillon, E. (1994). Effects of chronic stress on beta-adrenergic receptors in the homeless. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 56, 290-205.
- Dowell, D. A., & Farmer, G. (1992). Community response to homelessness: Social change and constraint in local intervention. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 20, 72-83.
doi:10.1002/1520-6629(199201)20:1<72::AID-JCOP2290200109>3.0.CO;2-Y
- Dumbleton, S. M. (2005). In the absence of home. *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, 30, 57-73.
doi:10.1300/J005v30n01_06
- Easton-Brooks, D. (2012). The conceptual context of knowledge. In S. R. Steinberg & G. S. Cannella (Eds.), *Critical qualitative research reader* (pp. 33-42). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Edidin, J. P., Ganim, Z., Hunter, S. J., & Karnik, N. S. (2011). The mental and physical health of homeless youth: A literature review. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 43, 354-375. doi:10.1007/s10578-011-0270-1
- Engstrom, D., Hernández, P., & Gangsei, D. (2008). Vicarious resilience: A qualitative investigation into its description. *Traumatology*, 14, 13-21.
doi:10.1177/1534765608319323

- Epel, E. S., Bandura, A., & Zimbardo, P. (1999). Escaping homelessness: The influences of self-efficacy and time perspective on coping with homelessness. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 29*, 575-596.
doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.1999.tb01402.x
- Etherington, K. (2004). *Becoming a reflexive researcher: Using ourselves in research*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Etherington, K., & Bridges, N. (2011). Narrative case study research: On endings and six session reviews. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 11*, 11-22.
doi:10.1080/14733145.2011.546072
- Eyrich-Garg, K. M. (2011). Sheltered in cyberspace? Computer use among the unsheltered 'street' homeless. *Computers in Human Behavior, 27*, 296-303.
doi:10.1016/j.chb.2010.08.007
- Farrell, D. C. (2010). The paradox of chronic homelessness: The conscious desire to leave homelessness and the unconscious familiarity of the street life. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 20*, 239-254.
doi:10.1080/10911350903269872
- Ferguson, K. M., & Xie, B. (2012). Adult support and substance use among youths who attend high school. *Child Youth Care Forum, 41*, 427-445.
doi:10.1007/s10566-012-9175-9
- Festinger, L., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 58*, 203-210.
- Finfgeld-Connett, D. (2010). Becoming homeless, being homeless and resolving homelessness among women. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 31*, 461-469.

doi:10.3109/01612840903586404

Finley, S., & Calabrese Barton, A. (2003). The power of space: Constructing a dialog of resistance, transformation, and homelessness. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16, 483-487. doi:10.1080/0951839032000099499

Finley, S., & Diversi, M. (2010). Critical homelessness: Expanding narratives of inclusive democracy. *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies*, 10, 4-13. doi:10.1177/1532708609351142

Fischer, C. T. (2012). Comments on protecting clients about whom we write (and speak). *Psychotherapy*, 49, 19-21. doi:10.1037/a0026486

Fisher, M. A. (2008). Protecting confidentiality rights: The need for an ethical practice model. *American Psychologist*, 63, 1-13. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.63.1.1

Fiske, S. T. (2010). Envy up, scorn down: How comparison divides us. *American Psychologist*, 65, 698-706. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.65.8.698

Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J., Glick, P., & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82, 878-902.

Fitzgerald, J., & Hamilton, M. (1996). The consequences of knowing: Ethical and legal liabilities in illicit drug research. *Social Science & Medicine*, 43, 1591-1600. doi:10.1016/S0277-9536(96)00055-X

Fitzpatrick, S. (2005). Explaining homelessness: A critical realist perspective. *Housing Theory and Society*, 22, 1-17. doi:10.1080/14036090510034563

Fitzpatrick, K. M., & Myrstor, B. (2011). The jailing of America's homeless: Evaluating the rabble management thesis. *Crime & Delinquency*, 57, 271-297.

doi:10.1177/0011128708322941

Fonagy, P., Steele, M., Steele, H., Higgitt, A. C., & Target, M. (1994). The theory and practice of resilience. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 35, 231-257.

doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.1994.tb01160.x

Fonagy, P., Steele, M., Steele, H., Leigh, T., Kennedy, R., Mattoon, G., & Target, M.

(1995). Attachment, the reflective self, and borderline states: The predictive specificity of the adult attachment interview and pathological emotional

development. In S. Goldberg, R. Muir, & J. Kerr (Eds.), *Attachment theory:*

Social, developmental, and clinical perspectives (pp. 223-279). Hillsdale, NJ:

Analytic Press.

Foscarinis, M. (1991). The politics of homelessness: A call to action. *American*

Psychologist, 46, 1232-1238. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.46.11.1232

Fraenkel, P. (2006). Engaging families as experts: Collaborative family program

development. *Family Process*, 45, 237-257. doi: 10.1111/j.1545-

5300.2006.00093.x

Fraley, R. C. (2002). Attachment stability from infancy to adulthood: Meta-analysis and

dynamic modeling of developmental mechanisms. *Personality and Social*

Psychology, 6, 123-151. doi:10.1207/S15327957PSPR0602_03

- Fraley, R. C., & Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Attachment and loss: A test of three competing models on the association between attachment-related avoidance and adaptation to bereavement. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 878-890. doi:10.1177/0146167204264289
- Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (2000). Adult romantic attachment: Theoretical developments, emerging controversies, and unanswered questions. *Review of General Psychology*, 4, 132-154. doi:10.1037//1089-2680.4.2.132
- Frankl, V. E. (1959). *Man's search for meaning*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Frazel, S., Khasla, V., Doll, H., & Geddes, J. (2008). The prevalence of mental disorders among the homeless in western countries: Systematic review and meta-regression analysis. *PloS Medicine* 5, 1670-1681.
- Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Friedman, B. D., & Levine-Holdowsky, M. (1997). Overcoming barriers to homeless delivery services: A community response. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 6, 13-28. doi:10.1023/B:JOSD.0000015186.16879.30
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Geller, J. (2000). Excluding institutions for mental diseases from federal reimbursement for services: Strategy or tragedy? *Psychiatric Services*, 51, 1397-1403.
- Gillath, O., Hart, J., Nofle, E. E., & Stockdale, G. D. (2009). Development and validation of a state adult attachment measure (SAAM). *Journal of Research in Personality*, 43, 362-373. doi:10.1016/j.jrp.2008.12.009
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

- Godfrey, E. B., & Wolf, S. (2015). Developing critical consciousness or justifying the system? A qualitative analysis of attributions for poverty and wealth among low-income racial/ethnic minority and immigrant women. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1037/cdp0000048
- Goering, P., Tolomiczenko, G., Sheldon, T., Boydell, K., & Wasylenki, D. (2002). Characteristics of people who are homeless for the first time. *Psychiatric Services, 53*, 1472-1474.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Gomm, R., Hammersley, M., & Foster, P. (1994). Case study and generalization. In *Case study method: Key issues, key texts* (pp. 33-40). London, England: Sage.
- Goodman, L. A., Liang, B., Helms, J. E., Latta, R. E., Sparks, E., & Weintraub, S. R. (2004). Training counseling psychologists as social justice agents: Feminist and multicultural principles in action. *The Counseling Psychologist, 32*, 793-837. doi:10.1177/0011000004268802
- Goodman, L., Saxe, L., & Harvey, M. (1991). Homelessness as psychological trauma: Broadening perspectives. *American Psychologist, 46*, 1219-1225. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.46.11.1219
- Grabbe, L., Nguy, S. T., & Higgins, M. K. (2012). Spirituality development for homeless youth: A mindfulness mediation feasibility pilot. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 21*, 925-937. doi:10.1007/s10826-011-9552-2

- Grabe, S., & Dutt., A. (2015). Counter narrative, the psychology of liberation, and the evolution of a women's social movement in Nicaragua. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 21, 89-105. doi:10.1037/pac0000080
- Greenberg, L. S., & Goldman, R. N. (2008). The dynamics of emotion, love, and power in an emotion-focused approach to couple therapy. *Person-Centered & Experiential Psychotherapies*, 7, 279-293. doi:10.1080/14779757.2008.9688473
- Guadagno, R. E., Muscanell, N. L., & Pollio, D. E. (2013). The homeless use Facebook?! Similarities of social network use between college students and homeless young adults. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29, 86-89. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2012.07.019
- Guest, Y. (2012). Reflections on resilience: A psycho-social exploration of the lifelong impact of having been in care during childhood. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 26, 109-124. doi:10.1080/02650533.2011.601287
- Hamarta, E., Deníz, M. E., & Saltali, N. (2009). Attachment styles as a predictor of emotional intelligence. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 9, 213-229.
- Hamid, A. W., Wykes, T., & Stansfeld, S. (1993). The homeless mentally ill: Myth and realities. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 39, 237-254.
- Hardiman, R., & Jackson, B. W. (1997). Conceptual foundations for social justice courses. In M. Adams, L. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook* (pp. 16-29). New York: Routledge.
- Harlow, H. F. (1958). The nature of love. *American Psychologist*, 13, 673-685. doi:10.1037/h0047884

- Harris, L. T., & Fiske, S. T. (2006). Dehumanizing the lowest of the low: Neuroimaging responses to extreme out-groups. *Psychological Science, 17*, 847-853.
doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01793.x
- Harter, L. M., Berquist, C., Titsworth, B. S., Novak, D., & Brokaw, T. (2005). The structuring of invisibility among the hidden homeless: The politics of space, stigma, and identity construction. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 33*, 305-327. doi:10.1080/00909880500278079
- Hauser, S. T., Golden, E., & Allen, J. P. (2006). Narrative in the study of resilience. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 61*, 205-227.
- Haverkamp, B. E. (2005). Ethical perspectives on qualitative research in applied psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 146-155.
doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.146
- Hayashi, G. M., & Strickland, B. R. (1998). Long-term effects of parental divorce on love relationships: Divorce as attachment disruption. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15*, 23-38. doi:10.1177/0265407598151002
- Haydon, K. C., Collins, W. A., Salvatore, J. E., Simpson, J. A., & Roisman, G. I. (2012). Shared and distinctive origins and correlates of adult attachment representations: The developmental organization of romantic functioning. *Child Development, 83*, 1689-1702. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01801.x
- Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*, 511-524.
doi:10.1037/0022-3514.52.3.511
- Herman, J. L. (1997). *Trauma and recovery*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

- Hernández, P., Gangsei, D., & Engstrom, D. (2007). Vicarious resilience: A new concept in work with those who survive trauma. *Family Process, 46*, 229-241.
doi:10.1111/j.1545-5300.2007.00206.x
- Herrman, H., Stewart, D. E., Diaz-Granados, N., Berger, E. L., Jackson, B., & Yuen, T. (2011). What is resilience? *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 56*, 258-265.
- Herrmann, L. (2008). Adjustment to college: The role of optimism, coping strategies, and parental attachment. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, 68*, 7664.
- Hiester, M., Nordstrom, A., & Swenson, L. M. (2009). Stability and change in parental attachment and adjustment outcomes during the first semester transition to college life. *Journal of College Student Development, 50*, 521-538.
doi:10.1353/csd.0.0089
- Hinnen, C., Sanderman, R., & Sprangers, M. A. G. (2009). Adult attachment as mediator between recollections of childhood and satisfaction with life. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, 16*, 10-21. doi:10.1002/cpp.600
- Hocking, J. E., & Lawrence, S. G. (2000). Changing attitudes towards the homeless: The effects of prosocial communication with the homeless. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless, 9*, 91-110.
- Hodge, D. R., Moser, S. E., & Shafer, M. S. (2012). Spirituality and mental health among homeless mothers. *Social Work Research, 36*, 245-255. doi:10.1093/swr/svs034
- Hodgetts, D., Chamberlain, K., & Radley, A. (2007). Considering photographs never taken during photo-production projects. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 4*, 263-280. doi:10.1080/14780880701583181

- Hodgetts, D., Radley, A., Chamberlain, K., & Hodgetts, A. (2007). Health inequalities and homelessness: Considering material, spatial and relational dimensions. *Journal of Health Psychology, 12*, 709-725. doi:10.1177/1359105307080593
- hooks, b. (1990). Choosing the margin as a space of radical openness. In *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics* (pp. 145-153). Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Hooper, L. M. (2007). The application of attachment theory and family systems theory to the phenomena of parentification. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 15*, 217-223. doi:10.1177/1066480707301290
- Hoshmand, L. T. (2005). Narratology, cultural psychology, and counseling research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 178-186.
doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.178
- Huey, L., Fthenos, G., & Hryniewicz, D. (2013). "If something happened, I will leave it, let it go and move on": Resiliency and victimized homeless women's attitudes toward mental health counseling. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 28*, 295-319.
doi:10.1177/0886260512454717
- Hurlbut, J. M., Robbins, L. K., & Hoke M. M. (2011). Correlations between spirituality and health-promoting behaviors among sheltered homeless women. *Community Health Nursing, 28*, 81-91. doi:10.1080/07370016.2011.564064
- Israel, N., Toro, P. A., & Ouellette, N. (2010). Changes in the composition of the homeless population: 1992-2002. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 46*, 49-59. doi:10.1007/s10464-010-9326-9

- Jefford, M., & Moore, R. (2008). Improvement of informed consent and the quality of consent documents. *Lancet Oncology*, 9, 485–93.
doi:10.1016/S14702045(08)70128-1
- Johnson, A. G. (2006). Privilege, oppression, and difference. In *Power, privilege and difference* (2nd ed., pp. 12-40). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Johnson, S. M. (2007). A new era for couple therapy: Theory, research, and practice in concert. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 26, 5-16. doi:10.1521/jsyt.2007.26.4.5
- Johnson, S. M. (2008). *Hold me tight: Seven conversations for a lifetime of love*. New York, NY: Hachette Book Group, Inc.
- Johnson, S. C., Dweck, C. S., Chen, F. S., Stern, H. L., Ok, S., & Berth, M. (2010). At the intersection of social and cognitive development: Internal working models of attachment in infancy. *Cognitive Science*, 34, 807-825.
doi:10.1111/j.1551-6709.2010.01112.x
- Johnson, T. S. (2008). Qualitative research in question: A narrative of disciplinary power with/in the IRB. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(2), 212-232.
doi:10.1177/1077800407308821
- Jones, B. T. (2013). The social ecology of homelessness: Exploring the dynamics of engagement among homeless street adults. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 23, 53-74. doi:10.1080/10911359.2012.739532
- Kang, Y., Gray, J. R., & Dovidio, J. F. (2014). The nondiscriminating heart: Lovingkindness meditation training decreases implicit intergroup bias. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 143, 1306-1313. doi:10.1037/a0034150

- Karavasilis, L., Doyle, A. B., & Markiewicz, D. (2003). Associations between parenting style and attachment to mother in middle childhood and adolescence. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 27*, 153-164.
doi:10.1080/0165025024400015
- Karreman, A., & Vingerhoets, A. J. J. M. (2012). Attachment and well-being: The mediating role of emotional regulation and resilience. *Personality and Individual Differences, 53*, 821-826. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2012.06.014
- Keating, L. M., Tomishima, M. A., Foster, S., & Alessandri, M. (2002). The effects of a mentoring program on at risk youth. *Adolescence, 37*, 717-734.
- Keller, H. (2013). Attachment and culture. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 44*, 175-194. doi:10.1177/0022022112472253
- Kendall-Tackett, K. (2002). The health effects of childhood abuse: Four pathways by which abuse can influence health. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 26*, 715-729.
doi:10.1016/S0145-2134(02)00343-5
- Kennedy, A. C., Lafa Agbényiga, D. L., Kasiborski, N., & Gladden, J. (2010). Risk chains over the life course among homeless urban adolescent mothers: Altering their trajectories through formal support. *Children and Youth Services Review, 32*, 1740-1749. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.07.018
- Kenny, M. E., & Sirin, S. R. (2006). Parental attachment, self-worth, and depressive symptoms among emerging adults. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 84*, 61-71. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2006.tb00380.x
- Kidd, S. A. (2007). Youth homelessness and social stigma. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 36*, 291-299.

- Kidd, S. A., & Davidson, L. (2007). "You have to adapt because you have no other choice": The stories of strength and resilience of 208 homeless youth in New York City and Toronto. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 35, 219-238.
doi:10.1002/jcop.20144
- Kidd, S., & Shahar, G. (2008). Resilience in homeless youth: The key role of self-esteem. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 78, 163-172.
doi:10.1037/0002-9432.78.2.163
- Kim, M. M., & Ford, J. D. (2006). Trauma and post-traumatic stress among homeless men: A review of current research. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 13, 1-22. doi:10.1300/J146v13n02_01
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2005). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. L. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 403-455). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kinsler, P. J., & Saxman, A. (2007). Traumatized offenders: Don't look now, but your jail's also your mental health center. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 8, 81-95.
doi:10.1300/J229v08n02_06
- Klerman, G. L., Weissman, M. M., Rounsaville, B. J., & Chevron, E. (1984). *Interpersonal psychotherapy of depression*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Krumer-Nevo, M., & Benjamin, O. (2010). Critical poverty knowledge: Contesting othering and social distancing. *Current Sociology*, 58, 693-714.
doi:10.1177/0011392110372729
- Krumer-Nevo, M., & Sidi, M. (2012). Writing against othering. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18, 299-309. doi:10.1177/1077800411433546

- Kryda, A. D., & Compton, M. T. (2009). Mistrust of outreach workers and lack of confidence in available services among individuals who are chronically street homeless. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 45, 144-150.
doi:10.1007/s10597-008-9163-6
- Lahman, M. K. (2008). Always othered ethical research with children. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 6, 281-300. doi:10.1177/1476718X08094451
- Lahman, M. K. E., Geist, M., Rodriguez, K. L., Graglia, P., & DeRoche, K. (2011). Culturally responsive relational reflexive ethics in research: The three Rs. *Quality and Quantity*, 45, 1397-1414. doi:10.1007/s11135-010-9347-3
- Lahman, M. K. E., Lalonde, T. L., Kincaid, T., Roche, J., Landram, S. V., & Richard, V. M. (2013). "My mind's NOT homeless": Methodological and ethical considerations for research with people who are homeless." Proceedings from American Educational Research Association conference, San Francisco, CA.
- Lamb, H. R. (1984). Deinstitutionalization and the homeless mentally ill. *Hospital and Community Psychiatry*, 35, 899-907.
- Langford, C. P., Bowsher, J., Maloney, J. P., & Lissis, P. P. (1997). Social support: A conceptual analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 25, 95-100.
doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.1997.1997025095.x
- Lankenau, S. E. (1999). Stronger than dirt: Public humiliation and status enhancement among panhandlers. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28, 288-318.
doi:10.1177/089124199129023451

- Larkin, H., & Park, J. (2012). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), services use, and services helpfulness among people experiencing homelessness. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 93, 85-93.
doi:10.1606/1044-3894.4192
- Laursen, E. K., & Birmingham, S. M. (2003). Caring relationships as a protective factor for at-risk youth: An ethnographic study. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 84, 240-246. doi:10.1606/1044-3894.101
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (1983). *The good high school: Portraits of character and culture*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S., & Davis, J. H. (1997). *The art and science of portraiture*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lebrun-Harris, L. A., Baggett, T. P., Jenkins, D. M., Dripipatana, A., Sharma, R., Hayashi, A. S., ...Ngo-Metzger, Q. (2013). Health status and health care experiences among homeless patients in federally supported health centers: Findings from the 2009 patient survey. *Health Service Research*, 48, 992-1017.
doi:10.1111/1475-6773.12009
- Lee, B. A., Tyler, K. A., & Wright, J. D. (2010). The new homelessness revisited. *Annual Reviews of Sociology*, 36, 501-521. doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115940
- Levenson, H. (1995). *Time-limited dynamic psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

- Lightfoot, M., Stein, J. A., Tevendale, H., & Preston, K. (2011). Protective factors associated with fewer multiple problem behaviors among homeless/runaway youth. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 40*, 878-889. doi:10.1080/15374416.2011.614581
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). *Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences*. In K. N. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 163-188). London: Sage Publishing.
- Lindamer, L. A., Liu, L., Sommerfeld, D. H., Folsom, D. P., Hawthorne, W., Garcia, P., ...Jeste, D. V. (2012). Predisposing, enabling, and need factors associated with high service use in a public mental health system. *Administrative Policy and Mental Health Journal, 39*, 200-209. doi:10.1007/s10488-011-0350-3
- Lott, B. (2012). The social psychology of class and classism. *American Psychologist, 67*, 650-658. doi:10.1037/a0029369
- Ludolph, P. S., & Bow, J. N. (2012). Complex alienation dynamics and very young children. *Journal of Child Custody, 9*, 153-178. doi:10.1080/15379418.2012.715545
- Lyddon, W. J., Bradford, E., & Nelson, J. P. (1993). Assessing adolescent and adult attachment: A review of current self-report measures. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 71*, 390-395. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.1993.tb02654.x
- Lynch, S. M., Keasler, A. L., Reaves, R. C., Channer, E. G., & Bukowski, L. T. (2007). The story of my strength: An exploration of resilience in the narratives of trauma survivors early in recovery. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma, 14*, 75-98. doi:10.1300/J146v14n01_05

- MacKnee, C. M., & Mervyn, J. (2002). Critical incidents that facilitate homeless people's transition off the streets. *Journal of Social Distress & the Homeless*, 11, 293-293-306. doi:10.1023/A: 1016837231886
- Magyar-Moe, J. L., Owens, R. L., & Conoley, C. W. (2015). Positive psychological interventions in counseling: What every counseling psychologists should know. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 43, 508-557. doi:10.1177/0011000015573776
- Main, M., & Goldwyn, R. (1994). *Adult attachment rating and classification system, manual in draft: Version 6.0*. Unpublished manuscript, University of California at Berkeley.
- Main, T. (1998). How to think about homelessness: Balancing structural and individual causes. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 7, 41-54.
doi:10.1023/A: 1022966631533
- Mancini, A. D., & Bonanno, G. A. (2009). Predictors and parameters of resilience to loss: Towards an individual differences model. *Journal of Personality*, 77, 1805-1831.
doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2009.00601.x
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, 56, 227-238. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.56.3.227

- Masten, A. S. (2007). Resilience in developing systems: Progress and promise as the fourth wave rises. *Development & Psychopathology, 19*, 921–930.
doi:10.1017/S0954579407000442
- Masten, A. S. (2012). Risk and resilience in the educational success of homeless and highly mobile children: Introduction to the special section. *Educational Researcher 41*, 363-374. doi:10.3102/0013189X12467366
- Masten, A. S., & Coatsworth, (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons learned from research on successful children. *American Psychologist, 53*, 205-220. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.53.2.205
- Masten, A. S., & Reed, M. J. (2002). Resilience in development. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 74-88). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Masten, A. S., & Shaffer, A. (2006). How families matter in child development Reflections from research on risk and resilience. In A. Clarke-Stewart & J. Dunn (Eds.), *Families count: Effects on child and adolescent development* (pp. 5-25). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- McCabe, A., & Peterson, C. (2011-2012). Predictors of adult narrative elaboration: Emotion, attachment, and gender. *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality, 31*, 327-344. doi:10.2190/IC.31.4.f
- McGloin, J. M., & Widom, C. S. (2001). Resilience among abused and neglected children grown up. *Development & Psychopathology, 13*, 1021–1038.
doi:10.1017/S095457940100414X

- McKenzie-Mohr, S., Coates, J., & McLeod, H. (2011). Responding to the needs of youth who are homeless: Calling for politicized trauma-informed intervention. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34, 136-143. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.09.008
- McNaughton, C. C. (2008). Transitions through homelessness, substance use and the effect of material marginalization and psychological trauma. *Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy*, 15, 177-188. doi:10.1080/09687630701377587
- McNulty, J. K., & Fincham, F. D. (2012). Beyond positive psychology: Toward a contextual view of psychological processes. *American Psychologist*, 67, 101-110. doi:10.1037/a0024572
- McQuiston, H. L., Gorroochurn, P., Hsu, E., & Caton, C. L. (2013). Risk factors associated with recurrent homelessness after a first homeless episode. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 50(5), 505-513. doi:10.1007/s10597-013-9608-4
- McWhirter, B. T., Besett-Alesch, T. M., Horibata, J., & Gat, I. (2002). Loneliness in high risk adolescents: The role of coping, self-esteem, and empathy. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 5, 69-84. doi:10.1080/1367626012011177 9
- Merriam, S. B. (1995). What can you tell from an N of 1?: Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 4, 51-60.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mertens, D. M. (2010). An introduction to research. In *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (3rd ed., pp. 1-45). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Mikulincer, M., Shaver, P. R., & Pereg, D. (2003). Attachment theory and affect regulation: The dynamics, development, and cognitive consequences of attachment-related strategies. *Motivation and Emotion, 27*, 77-102.
doi:10.1023/A:1024515519160
- Mikulincer, M., Shaver, P. R., & Sapir-Lavid, Y., & Avihou-Kanza, N. (2009). What's inside the minds of securely and insecurely attached people? The secure-base script and its associations with attachment-style dimensions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97*, 615-633.
doi:10.1177/1948550610389822
- Moore, J. (2007). Polarity or integration? Towards a fuller understanding of home and homelessness. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research, 24*, 143-159.
- Morrell-Bellai, T., Goering, P. N., & Boydell, K. M. (2000). Becoming and remaining homeless: A qualitative investigation. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 21*, 581-604.
- Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 250-260.
doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250
- Moxley, D. P., Washington, O. G. M., & Calligan, H. F. (2012). Narrative insight into risk, vulnerability and resilience among older homeless African American women. *The Arts in Psychotherapy, 39*, 471-478. doi: 10.1016/j.aip.2012.08.002
- Muñoz, M., Vázquez, C., Bermejo, M., & Vázquez, J. J. (1999). Stressful life events among homeless people: Quantity, types, timing, and perceived causality. *Journal of Community Psychology, 27*, 73-87.

- Myers, D. (2005). The self in a social world. In *Social psychology* (8th edition; pp. 39-81). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Myers, D. R., Lawrence, S., & Jones, V. (2013). Will you care with me? Congregational responses with impoverished older persons. *Social Work & Christianity*, 40, 460-478.
- National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2013). *Snapshot of homelessness*. Retrieved from http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/snapshot_of_homelessness
- National Coalition for the Homeless. (2009). *How many people experience homelessness?* Retrieved from http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/How_Many.html
- National Coalition for the Homeless. (2013). *Homeless person's bill of rights legislation*. Retrieved from http://www.nationalhomeless.org/advocacy/Homeless_Bill_of_Rights.html
- Neiman, L. (1988). A critical review of resiliency literature and its relevance to homeless children. *Children's Environments Quarterly*, 5, 17-25.
- Neria, Y., Guttman-Steinmetz, S., Koenen, K., Levinovsky, L., Zakin, G., & Dekel, R. (2001). Do attachment and hardiness relate to each other and to mental health in real-life stress. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 18, 844-858.
doi:10.1177/0265407501186006
- Nguyen, C. M., Liu, W. M., Hernandez, J. O., & Stinson, R. (2012). Problem-solving appraisal, gender role conflict, help-seeking behavior, and psychological distress among men who are homeless. *Journal of Men & Masculinity*, 13, 270-282.
doi:10.1037/a0025523

- Nievar, M. A. (2008). Sensitivity as a privileged predictor of attachment: A second perspective on De Wolff and van IJzendoorn's meta-analysis. *Social Development, 17*, 102-114. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2007.00417.x
- Nooe, R. M., & Patterson, D. A. (2010). The ecology of homelessness. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 20*, 105-152.
doi:10.1080/10911350903269757
- Nyamathi, A., Marfisee, M., Slagle, A., Greengold, B., Liu, Y., & Leake, B. (2012). Correlates of depressive symptoms among homeless young adults. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 34*, 97-117. doi:10.1177/0193945910388948
- O'Conner, E., & McCartney, K. (2007). Examining teacher-child relationships and achievement as part of an ecological model of development. *American Educational Research Journal, 44*, 340-369. doi:10.3102/0002831207302172
- Ognibene, T. C., & Collins, N. L. (1998). Adult attachment styles, perceived social support and coping strategies. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 15*, 323-345. doi:10.1177/0265407598153002
- Ortega-Alcázar, I., & Dyck, I. (2012). Migrant narratives of health and well-being: Challenging 'othering' process through photo-elicitation interviews. *Critical Social Policy, 32*, 106-125. doi:10.1177/0261018311425981
- Ortigo, K. M., Westen, D., DeFife, J. A., & Bradley, B. (2013). Attachment, social cognition, and posttraumatic stress symptoms in a traumatized, urban population: Evidence for the medicating role of object relations. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 26*, 361-368. doi:10.1002/jts.21815

- Page, T., & Bretherton, I. (2001). Mother-and father-child attachment themes in the story completions of pre-schoolers from post-divorce families: Do they predict relationships with peers and teachers? *Attachment and Human Development*, 3, 1-29. doi:10.1080/713761897
- Paradis, E. K. (2000). Feminist and community psychology ethics in research with homeless women. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 28, 839-858.
- Parks, S., Birtel, M. D., & Crisp, R. J. (2014). Evidence that a brief meditation exercise can reduce prejudice toward homeless people. *Social Psychology*, 45, 458-465. doi:10.1027/1864-9335/a000212
- Pasque, P., Carducci, R., Kuntz, A. K., & Gildersleeve, R. E. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry for equity in higher education: Methodological implications, negotiations, and responsibilities*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Patterson, M. L., Markey, M. A., & Somers, J. M. (2012). Multiple paths to just ends: Using narrative interviews and timelines to explore health equity and homelessness. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11, 132-151.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Perry, B., & Szalavitz, M. (2006). *The boy who was raised as a dog: What traumatized children can teach us about loss, love, and healing*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Peterson, J. C., Antony, M. G., & Thomas, R. J. (2012). "This right here is all about living": Communicating the "common sense" about home stability through CBPR and photovoice. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 40, 247-270. doi:10.1080/00909882.2012.693941

- Petrovich, J. C., & Cronley, C. C. (2015). Deep in the heart of Texas: A phenomenological exploration of unsheltered homelessness. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1037/ort0000043
- Pickett-Schenk, S. A., Cook, J. A., Grey, D. D., & Butler, S. B. (2007). Family contact and housing stability in a national multi-site cohort of homeless adults with severe mental illness. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 28, 327-339. doi:10.1007/s10935-007-0098-4
- Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, J. G. (2006). Locating narrative inquiry historically: Thematics in the turn to narrative. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry* (pp. 3-35). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pleace, N. (1998). Single homelessness as social exclusion: The unique and the extreme. *Social Policy & Administration*, 32, 46-59. doi:10.1111/1467-9515.00085
- Plummer, K. (1983). *Documents of life: An introduction to the problems and literature of a humanistic model*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 137-145. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.137
- Polvere, L., Macnaughton, E., & Piat, M. (2013). Participant perspectives on housing first and recovery: Early findings from the at home/Chez Soi project. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 36, 110-112. doi:10.1037/h0094979

- Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 126-136. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.126
- Poremski, D., Whitley, R., & Latimer, E. (2015). Building trust with people receiving supported employment and housing first services. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/prj0000137
- President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. (2003). *Achieving the promise: Transforming mental health care in America* (Final report, DHHS Publication No. SMA 03-3832). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved from [http:// www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/report/FinalReport/toc.html](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/report/FinalReport/toc.html)
- Radley, A., Hodgetts, D., & Cullen, A. (2005). Visualizing homelessness: A study in photography and estrangement. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 15, 273-295. doi:10.1002/casp.825
- Rayburn, R. L., & Corzine, J. (2010). Your shelter or mine? Romantic relationships among the homeless. *Deviant Behavior*, 31, 756-774. doi:10.1080/01639621003748803
- Reitzes, D. C., Crimmins, T. J., Yarbrough, J., & Parker, J. (2011). Social support and social network ties among the homeless in a downtown Atlanta park. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 39, 274-291. doi:10.1002/jcop.20431
- Reutter, K. K., & Bigattie, S. M. (2014). Religiosity and spirituality as resiliency resources: Moderation, mediation, or moderated mediation? *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 53, 56-72. doi:10.1111/jssr.12081

- Rice, E., Kurzban, S., & Ray, D. (2012). Homeless but connected: The role of heterogeneous social network ties and social networking technology in the mental health outcomes of street-living adolescents. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 48(6), 692-698. doi:10.1007/s10597-011-9462-1
- Riggs, E. H., & Coyle, A. (2002). Young people's accounts of homelessness: A case study analysis of psychological well-being and identity. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 17, 5-15.
- Rivlin, L. G. (1990). The significance of home and homelessness. *Marriage & Family Review*, 15, 39-56. doi:10.1300/J002v15n01_03
- Roche, J. (2012, April). *I'm homeless not hopeless: An exploration of homeless adults' attachment-based narratives*. Proceedings from Rocky Mountain Psychological Association conference, Reno, NV.
- Roche, J. (2013, August). *Promoting resident resiliency: A strengths-based exploration at a homeless shelter*. Poster session presented at the 121st Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu, HI.
- Rodell, D. E., Benda, B. B., & Rodell, L. (2003). Suicidal thoughts among homeless alcohol and other drug abusers. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 21, 57-74. doi:10.1300/J020v21n02_04
- Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On becoming a person*. Oxford, England: Houghton Mifflin.
- Rogers, E. B., Stanford, M. S., Dolan, S. L., Clark, J., Martindale, S. L., Lake, S. L., ...Sejud, L. R. (2012). Helping people without homes: Simple steps for psychologists seeking to change lives. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 43, 86-93. doi:10.1037/a0026606

- Rokach, A. (2005). Private lives in public places: Loneliness of the homeless. *Social Indicators Research*, 72, 99-114. doi:10.1007/s11205-004-4590-4
- Rossi, P. H. (1990). The old homeless and the new homeless in historical perspective. *American Psychologist*, 45, 954-959. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.45.8.954
- Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (1998). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rutten, B. P. F., Hammels, C., Geschwind, N., Menne-Lothmann, C., Pishva, E., Schruers, K., ... Wichers, M. (2013). Resilience in mental health: Linking psychological and neurobiological perspectives. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 128, 3-20. doi:10.1111/acps.12095
- Rutter, M. (1990). Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms. In J. Rolf, A. S. Masten, D. Cicchetti, K. H. Neuchterlein, & S. Weintraub (Eds.), *Risk and protective factors in the development of psychopathology* (pp. 79-101). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Sadow, D., & Hopkins, B. (1993). Resiliency training and empowerment among homeless, substance-abusing veterans: Increasing a sense of self-efficacy and internal attribution of control as a result of resiliency training. *Research Communications in Psychology, Psychiatry, and Behavior*, 18, 121-134.
- Salter-Ainsworth, M. D., & Bowlby, J. (1989). An ethological approach to personality development. *American Psychologist*, 46, 333-341.
- Scheier, M. F., Weintraub, J. K., & Carver, C. S. (1986). Coping with stress: Divergent strategies of optimists and pessimists. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 1257-1264.

- Schonfeld, T. L., Brown, J. S., Weniger, M., & Gordon, B. (2003). Research involving the homeless: arguments against payment-in-kind (PinK). *IRB: Ethics and Human Research*, 25, 17-20. doi:10.2307/3564602
- Schmitz, C. L., Wagner, J. D., & Menke, E. M. (2001). The interconnection of childhood poverty and homelessness: Negative impact/points of access. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 82, 69-77.
doi:10.1606/1044-3894.223
- Schoon, I. (2006). *Risk and resilience: Adaptations in changing times*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Seery, M. D., Leo, R. J., Lupien, S. P., Kondrak, C. L., & Almonte, J. L. (2013). An upside to adversity?: Moderate cumulative lifetime adversity is associated with resilient responses in the face of controlled stressors. *Psychological Science*, 24, 1181-1189. doi:10.1177/0956797612469210
- Segovia, F., Moore, J. L., Linnville, S. E., Hoyt, R. E., & Hain, R. E. (2012). Optimism predicts resilience in repatriated prisoners of war: A 37-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 25, 330-336. doi:10.1002/jts
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1999). The president's address. *American Psychologist*, 54, 559-562.
- Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.55.1.5
- Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, 60, 410-421. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.60.5.410

- Shaver, P. R., & Mikulincer, M. (2010). New directions in attachment theory and research. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 27, 163-172.
doi:10.1177/0265407509360899
- Shaw, L. L., Batson, C. D., & Todd, R. M. (1994). Empathy avoidance: Forestalling feeling for another in order to escape the motivational consequences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 879-887.
doi:10.1037//0022-3514.67.5.879
- Shaw, M., Dorling, D., & Smith, G. (1999). Poverty, social exclusion and minorities. In M. Marmont & R. Wilkinson (Eds.), *Social determinants of health* (pp. 211-239). New York, NY: Oxford.
- Shelton, K. H., Taylor, P. J., Bonner, A., & van den Bree, M. (2009). Risk factors for homelessness: Evidence from a population-based study. *Psychiatric Services*, 60, 465-472. doi:10.1176/appi.ps.60.4.465
- Shier, M. L., Jones, M. E., & Graham, J. R. (2011). Sociocultural factors to consider when addressing the vulnerability of social service users: Insights from women experiencing homelessness. *Affilia*, 26, 367-381.
doi:10.1177/0886109911428262
- Shpungin, E., & Lyubansky, M. (2006). Navigating social class roles in community research. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 37, 227-235.
doi:10.1007/s10464-006-9040-9
- Shuler, P. A., Gelberg, L., & Brown, M. (1994). The effects of spiritual/religious practices on psychological well-being among inner city homeless women. *Nurse Practitioner Forum*, 5, 106-113.

- Sieck, B. C. (2012). Obtaining clinical writing informed consent versus using client disguise and recommendations for practice. *Psychotherapy, 49*, 3-11.
doi:10.1037/a0025059
- Siegel, D. J. (2001). Toward an interpersonal neurobiology of the developing mind: Attachment relationships, “mindsight,” and neural integration. *Infant Mental Health Journal, 22*, 67-94.
doi:10.1002/1097-0355(200101/04)22:1<67::AID-IMHJ3>3.0.CO;2-G
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). New York: Zed Books.
- Smith, L., & Mao, S. (2012). Social class and psychology. In N. A. Fouad, J. A. Carter, & L. M. Subich (Eds.), *APA handbook of counseling psychology, Vol. 1: Theories, research, and methods* (pp. 523-540). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Smith, L. R., & Redington, R. M. (2010). Class dismissed: Making the case for the study of classist microaggressions. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 269-285). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Smith, L. C., Shin, R. Q., & Officer, L. M. (2012). Moving counseling forward on LGB and transgender issues: Speaking queerly on discourses and microaggressions. *The Counseling Psychologist, 40*, 385-408. doi:10.1177/0011000011403165
- Snodgrass, J. L. (2013). Spirituality and homelessness: Implications for pastoral counseling. *Pastoral Psychology, 62*, 1-11. doi:10.1007/s11089-013-0550-8

- Sosin, M. R. (2003). Explaining adult homelessness in the US by stratification or situation. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 13*, 91-104.
doi:10.1002/casp.716
- Staab, S. D., & Reimers, F. A. (2013). Competent poverty training. *Journal of Clinical Psychology: In Session, 69*, 172-181. doi: 10.1002/jclp.21956
- Stablein, T. (2011). Helping friends and the homeless milieu: Social capital and the utility of street peers. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 40*, 290-317.
doi:10.1177/0891241610390365
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Steele, C. M. (1997). A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American Psychologist, 52*, 613-629.
doi:10.1037//0003-066X.52.6.613
- Stein, J. A., Leslie, M. B., & Nyamathi, A. (2002). Relative contributions of parent substance use and childhood maltreatment to chronic homelessness, depression, and substance abuse problems among homeless women: Mediating roles of self-esteem and abuse in adulthood. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 26*, 1011-1027.
doi:10.1016/S0145-2134(02)00382-4
- Stuart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, 42 USC 1130 (1987).
- Stump, M. J., & Smith, J. E. (2008). The relationship between posttraumatic growth and substance use in homeless women with histories of traumatic experience. *The American Journal of Addictions, 17*, 478-487. doi:10.1080/10550490802409017

- Styron, T. H., Janoff-Bulman, R., & Davidson, L. (2000). "Please ask me how I am": Experiences of family homelessness in the context of single mothers' lives. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 9, 143-165.
- Sumerlin, J. R. (1996). What have you learned from your homeless experience? A phenomenological approach for counseling unsheltered homeless men. *Psychological Reports*, 79, 883-890. doi:10.2466/pr0.1996.79.3.883
- Sumerlin, J. R., & Bundrick, C. M. (1997). Research on homeless men and women: Existential-humanistic and clinical thinking. *Psychological Reports*, 80, 1303-1314. doi:10.2466/pr0.1997.80.3c.1303
- Svanberg, P. O. G. (1998). Attachment, resilience, and prevention. *Journal of Mental Health*, 7, 543-578. doi:10.1080/09638239817716
- Swick, K. J. (2005). Helping homeless families overcome barriers to successful functioning. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33, 195-200. doi:10.1007/s10643-005-0044-0
- Talbott, J. A. (1992). The care of the chronic mentally ill, deinstitutionalization and homelessness in the United States. *Psychiatria Hungarica*, 7, 615-626.
- Tavecchio, L. W. C., Thomeer, M. A. E., & Meeus, W. (1999). Attachment, social network and homelessness in young people. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 27, 247-262. doi:10.2224/sbp.1999.27.3.247
- Taylor-Seehafer, M., Jacobvitz, D., & Steiker, L. H. (2008). Patterns of attachment organization, social connectedness, and substance use in a sample of older homeless adolescents. *Family Community Health*, 31, 581-588. doi: 10.1097/01.FCH.0000304021.05632.a1

- Taylor-Seehafer, M., Johnson, R., Rew, L., Fouladi, R. T., Land, L., & Abel, E. (2007). Attachment and sexual health behaviors in homeless youth. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, 12*, 37-48.
doi:10.1111/j.1744-6155.2007.00087.x
- Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (2004). Posttraumatic growth: Conceptual foundations and empirical evidence. *Psychological Inquiry, 15*, 1-18.
doi:10.1207/s15327965pli1501_01
- Tedeschi, R. G., & Kilmer, R. P. (2005). Assessing strengths, resilience, and growth to guide clinical interventions. *Professional Psychotherapy: Research and Practice, 36*, 230-237. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.36.3.230
- Tessler, R., Rosenheck, R., & Gamache, G. (2001). Gender differences in self-reported reasons for homelessness. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless, 10*, 243-254. doi:10.1023/A:1016688707698 1
- Teyber, E., & McClure, F. (2011). *Interpersonal process in therapy: An integrative model*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Thomas, Y., Gray, M. A., & McGinty, S. (2012). An exploration of subjective wellbeing among people experiencing homelessness: A strengths-based approach. *Social Work in Health Care, 51*, 780-797. doi:10.1080/00981389.2012.686475
- Tischler, V., Edward, V., & Vostanis, P. (2009). Working therapeutically with mothers who experience the trauma of homelessness: An opportunity for growth. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 9*, 42-46.
doi:10.1080/14733140802656198

- Tompsett, C. J., Fowler, P. J., & Toro, P.A. (2009). Age differences among homeless individuals: Adolescence through adulthood. *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, 37, 86-99. doi:10.1080/10852350902735551
- Torchalla, I., Strehlau, V., Li, K., Aube Linden, I., Noel, F., & Krausz, M. (2014). Posttraumatic stress disorder and substance use disorder comorbidity in homeless adults: Prevalence, correlates, and sex differences. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 28(2), 443-452. doi:10.1037/a0033674
- Torchalla, I., Strehlau, V., Li, K., Schuetz, C., & Krausz, M. (2012). The association between childhood maltreatment subtypes and current suicide risk among homeless men and women. *Child Maltreatment*, 17, 132-143. doi:10.1177/1077559512439350
- Toro, P. A., Trickett, E., Wall, D. D., & Salem, D.A. (1991). Homelessness in the United States: An ecological perspective. *American Psychologist*, 46, 1208–1218. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.46.11.1208
- Toro, P. A., Tulloch, E., & Ouellette, N. (2008). Stress, social support, and outcomes in two probability samples of homeless adults. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 36, 483-498. doi:10.1002/jcop.20190
- Tsai, J., Edens, E. L., & Rosenheck, R. A. (2011). A typology of childhood problems among chronically homeless adults and its association with housing and clinical outcomes. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 22, 853-870. doi:10.1353/hpu.2011.0081

- Tummala-Narra, P., Liang, B., & Harvey, M. R. (2007). Aspects of safe attachment in the recovery from trauma. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, & Trauma, 14*, 1-18. doi:10.1300/J146v14n03_01
- Tweed, R. G., Biswas-Diener, R., & Lehman, D. R. (2012). Self-perceived strengths among people who are homeless. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 7*, 481-492. doi:10.1080/17439760.2012.719923
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2010). *The annual homeless assessment report to congress: 2009*. Washington, DC: Author.
- U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2010). *Opening doors: Federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Van Auken, P. M., Frisvoll, S. J., & Stewart, S. I. (2010). Visualising community: Using participant-driven photo-elicitation for research and application. *Local Environment, 15*, 373-388. doi:10.1080/13549831003677670
- van IJzendoorn, M. H., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (2010). Invariance of adult attachment across gender, age, culture, and socioeconomic status? *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 27*, 200-208. doi:10.1177/0265407509360908
- van IJzendoorn, M. H., & Kroonenberg, P. M. (1988). Cross-cultural patterns of attachment: A meta-analysis of the strange situation. *Child Development, 59*, 147-156. doi:10.2307/1130396
- van IJzendoorn, M. H., & Sagi-Schwartz, A. (2008). Cross-cultural patterns of attachment: Universal and contextual dimensions. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research and clinical applications* (pp. 713-734). New York, NY: Guilford.

- Vasquez, M. J. T. (2012). Psychology and social justice: Why we do what we do. *American Psychologist*, 67, 337-346. doi:10.1037/a0029232
- Vo, C. S. (2014). Gratitude: Duty, virtue, and practice. *Social Work & Christianity*, 41, 175-193.
- Wakin, M. (2008). Using vehicles to challenge antisleeping ordinances. *City & Community*, 7, 309-329. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6040.2008.00269.x
- Walsh, F. (2003). Family resilience: A framework for clinical practice. *Family Process*, 42, 1-18. doi:10.1111/j.1545-5300.2003.00001.x
- Washington, O., & Moxley, D. (2009). "I have three strikes against me": Narratives of plight and efficacy among older African American homeless women and their implications for engaged inquiry. In S. Evans, C. Taylor, M. Dunlap, & D. Miller (Eds.), *African Americans and community engagement in higher education* (pp. 189–203). New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Watson, J. (2011). Understanding survival sex: Young women, homelessness and intimate relationships. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 14, 639-655. doi:10.1080/13676261.2011.588945
- Welikala, T. (2007). Flirting with boundaries: Artistic spaces, social sciences spaces, and narrative inquiry. *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities XXXIII*, 1 & 2, 131-148.
- Wenzel, S., Holloway, I., Golinelli, D., Ewing, B., Bowman, R., & Tucker, J. (2012). Social networks of homeless youth in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 41, 561-571. doi:10.1007/s10964-011-9709-8

- West, J., & Oldfather, P. (1995). Pooled case comparison: An innovation for cross-case study. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1, 454-464. doi:10.1177/107780049500100405
- Westaby, J. D., Pfaff, D. L., & Redding, N. (2014). Psychology and social networks: A dynamic network theory perspective. *American Psychologist*, 69, 269-284. doi:10.1037/a0036106
- Westphal, M., & Bonanno, G. A. (2007). Posttraumatic growth and resilience to trauma: Different sides of the same coin or different coins? *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 56, 417-427. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2007.00298.x
- Whaley, A. L., & Link, B. G. (1998). Racial categorization and stereotype-based judgments about homeless people. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 28, 189-205. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.1998.tb01701.x.
- Whitbeck, L., & Hoyt, D. R. (1999). *Nowhere to grow: Homeless and runaway adolescents and their families*. New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- White, M., & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Wisehart, C. G., Whatley, M. A., & Briehl, D. S. (2013). The effectiveness of the faces of homelessness educational program on student attitudes towards the homeless. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 15, 483-494.
- Yankoski, M. (2005). *Under the overpass: A journey of faith on the streets of America*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc.
- Yoshikawa, H., Aber, J. L., & Beardslee, W. R. (2012). The effects of poverty on the mental, emotional, and behavioral health of children and youth: Implications for prevention. *American Psychologist*, 67, 272-284. doi:10.1037/a0028015

- Zammichieli, M. E. (1997). Predicting homelessness following psychiatric hospitalization. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 58(6-B), 3330.
- Zayas, V., Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Aber, J. L. (2011). Roots of adult attachment: Maternal caregiving at 18 months predicts adult peer and partner attachment. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 2, 289-297.
doi:10.1177/1948550610389822
- Zlotnick, C., Tam, T., & Robertson, M. J. (2003). Disaffiliation, substance use, and exiting homelessness. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 38, 577-599.
doi:10.1081/JA-120017386
- Zugazaga, C. B. (2008). Understanding social support of the homeless: A comparison of single men, single women, and women with children. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 89, 447-455. doi:10.1606/1044-3894.3770

APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Good Morning / Evening:

My name is Jeff Roche and I am a graduate student from the University of Northern Colorado. I am interested in the challenges and strengths of those who are currently homeless, trying to challenge stereotypes, and developing a more complete understanding of what it means to be homeless and broad factors that impact the path to homelessness.

I am here today because I would like to be able to interact with some of you for my dissertation research. My hope is to be able to work with and interview 4-6 English-speaking adults, 18 years of age or older, that are legally able to consent for themselves. Due to the particular nature of my study, you would not qualify for this study if you are a veteran, the sole caretaker of a child in this shelter, or are in the midst of leaving/escaping a violent situation.

If you were to participate in this study, you will learn about its purpose, and the benefits and potential risks of participating. Participants will be compensated with gift cards for their participation (\$30 for completion of tasks and \$20 for being available to follow-up to go over findings), totaling up to \$50 for complete participation. Please know that what you say in the interviews will be kept private and confidential.

Should more than four individuals express interest, I will review details of the study with everyone and then randomly choose four that are eligible.

Thank you,
Jeff

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH



**CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO**

Project Title: Counter-Narratives of Adults who are Homeless: Attachment and Resiliency in Context
 Researcher: Jeffrey D. Roche, B.A. Psychology and Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Doctoral Student, Counseling Psychology, University of Northern Colorado
 E-mail: roche.unco@gmail.com Advisor: Dr. Basilia Softas-Nall Phone: 970-351-1631

Purpose and Description: The purpose of this study is to explore the life stories of people who experience homelessness in Colorado. The focus is on relationships, feelings about oneself, sources of support, major life events, and how these stories relate to one's current outlook on life and their environment.

You are being asked to participate in several tasks, including: 1. A 60-minute interview focusing on sources of support over time and your general experiences across your lifespan, 2. Taking pictures (camera will be provided) of your environment and answering questions about them, and 3. Following up with me to double-check results for accuracy. A couple of fellow doctoral students will help me review materials to double-check my work, though your name will not be connected with materials reviewed. You will be asked to provide contact information (phone or e-mail) to allow for this follow-up. Interviews will be audiotape recorded. I will also take hand written notes.

Your identity will be kept confidential. You will be asked to select a "code name" to be known as for all recording purposes. All documents including consent form, tapes, notes, and photographs will be locked in a box under my supervision at all times except during use. All computer documents related to this project will be password protected. There are certain limits to confidentiality, which include situations in which I am required by law to report. Those situations are a) suspected incidents of child or elderly abuse or neglect, b) threats of harm to self, c) threats of serious harm to others, d) threats to national security, and e) an emergency situation where you become gravely disabled, and e) the event that I am subpoenaed by a court of law. Participants are advised to not discuss potentially incriminating material, past or present.

Potential risks in this project are minimal. I will be asking you to recall relationships, events, and personal experiences while telling your story, which may be emotional. The harm is in not knowing how to express or process these emotions once they have been shared. This risk is not expected to be any greater than the risk involving dealing with difficult emotions in everyday life. Should some uncomfortable emotions come up for you, you will be provided with a list of nearby, low-cost community counseling options that are available to you if should decided to use them. In addition to generating greater awareness of homelessness in Colorado, participants will be progressively compensated for their participation (\$30 for completion of tasks 1 and 2, \$20 for the follow-up task 3), totaling up to \$50 for complete participation, paid in the form of food or gas gift cards, or in shelter donations.

At the end of your participation, you will be free to ask any additional question about the research or the question that were asked of you. Additionally, you can express your thoughts and opinions of the interview itself.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, your agreement to begin the interview process indicates consent to participate in the study. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS FORM

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS FORM

1. Pseudonym: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Gender: _____
4. Contact information: _____ (e-mail) _____
(phone)
5. Highest level of education completed:

6. Ethnicity/Race:

7. Length of time presently homeless or unhoused:

8. Total number of homelessness episodes:

9. Total length of time spent homeless:

10. Shelter status: (single, accompanied by children, accompanied by partner, both)
11. Employment status:

12. History of foster care:

13. History of juvenile justice:

14. History of jail/prison:

15. Veteran: yes or no
16. Actively leaving situation of IPV or other violence: yes or no

APPENDIX D
PILOT STUDY 1

PILOT STUDY 1 (ROCHE, 2012)

Theoretical Perspective: Constructionism

- The meaning that participants made of their lifetime of subjectively based experiences was not discovered, but rather, constructed and objectively true for them. This personally constructed reality emerged in their narrative, which was also impacted by relational and historical contexts.
- Constructivism seeks to understand meaning making, while constructionism transmits it to others.

Participants and Setting

- Purposeful, convenient sampling of ten volunteers currently staying in a homeless shelter.
- Interviews took place in the conference room of a 60-bed homeless shelter in the Rocky Mountain region that is open to men, women, and accompanied children. Facilities are rather new, thus highly functional, accommodating, secure, and clean. Caseworkers are on-site to facilitate reintegration.

Data Collection

- Researcher reflexivity journal memoed observations, interactions, and process feelings.
- On-site resources and select participant personal belongings were noted as artifacts.
- Ten semi-structured interviews (~60 minutes) were conducted with residents. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, incorporating nonverbal observations.
 - Sample questions: What are some of your earliest memories of home and your family? Could you describe some major turning points in your life that led to you becoming homeless? In what ways do you believe your feelings towards relationships, experiences, yourself, and the community have informed or impacted your current situational outlook?

Data Analysis

- Study was informed by both narrative and case study methodology. While narratives were gathered, attachment-based themes within those narratives were the bounded cases.
- Themes were extracted via within- and cross-case analysis; interactional themes, themes of continuity, and situational themes were of interest within the narratives.

Findings- Major Themes

- Adverse attachment experiences (ranged from financial support but lacking emotional warmth/role modeling to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse) present for all participants. Precursor to later AODA, criminal behavior, or bad decisions for many. Affects or informed outlook on self, situation and others. Thin descriptions present for several participants.
- Identity hierarchy kept distance from other homeless and minimized distance with non-homeless.
- Identity compartmentalization of former self or actions versus current self that is looking forward to a future self. Often marked by themes of wanting to give back, continue to transform oneself, and be a better example for their children. Of note, birth of a child and/or spiritual epiphany/intervention was frequently mentioned as a major turning point.
- Clear resiliency in all participants; many highly motivated despite facing barriers.

APPENDIX E
PILOT STUDY 2

PILOT STUDY 2 (ROCHE, 2013)

Theoretical Perspective: Constructionism, Critical Theory, and Portraiture

- *Constructionism*: the meaning that participants made of their subjectively based experiences and encounters at the shelter was not discovered, but rather, constructed and objectively true for them.
- *Critical theory*: use of participant voices to promote praxis and positive change at the shelter.
- *Portraiture*: search for goodness is inherently strengths-based, while recognizing growth areas.

Participants and Setting

- Purposeful, convenient sampling of five residents currently staying in a homeless shelter and ten staff members from all levels of the shelter's functioning.
- Interviews took place in a 60-bed homeless shelter that is open to men, women, and accompanied children. Facilities are rather new, thus highly functional, accommodating, secure, and clean. Shelter operates on three levels: overnight emergency, transitional housing, and a pilot project focused on permanent solutions and case-by-case needs. Caseworkers are on-site to facilitate reintegration and community resource ties are continually strengthening.

Data Collection

- Researcher reflexivity journal memoed observations, interactions, and process feelings.
- On-site resources, previous resident surveys, case management progress notes, resident rules and policies packet, and select correspondences between residents and staff were noted as artifacts.
- Fifteen semi-structured interviews (~30-60 minutes each) were conducted with residents (5) and staff (10). Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed in full (150 pages), incorporating nonverbal observations.
 - Sample questions for staff: How would you describe your personal philosophy of working with the residents at the shelter? What needs do you see being met through this program? What are the strengths of the program that help accomplish this?
 - Sample questions for residents: What would you say your current life outlook is? What are some of your strengths? How are those recognize or utilized here? If there is anything about the program you would change, what would it be and why? Any positive features you'd like to see more of?

Data Analysis

- Study was informed by case study methodology in that the intrinsic case of this particular shelter and the instrumental case of the process by which resiliency was promoted were bound by time, location, and subject matter filtered by the notion of goodness.
- Themes of goodness related to the promotion of residents transition efforts were extracted via within- and cross-case analysis and the triangulation of data sources.

Findings- Emergent Themes of Goodness

- Either by resonant identification, observation, or negative example, the following themes emerged as important for the promotion of resident resiliency and transition efforts:
 - a.) recognizing imperfections and growth areas. b.) balancing empathy and structure. c.) building on hierarchy of needs and systemic influences. d.) importance of consistency and communication. e.) willingness to go above and beyond without neglecting self-care or enabling inaction.

APPENDIX F
STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. I was wondering if we could spend some time getting to know each other a bit; why don't you tell me a bit about yourself? Note: Allow participant to ask questions of researcher as well within reason to build rapport.
- b. Could you describe some major turning points or critical events in your life that you feel led to you becoming homeless/residing in this shelter presently?
 - i. How would you describe your actual experience of homelessness?
 - ii. What has helped (or hindered) your ability to cope with this?
 - iii. What goals or hopes do you presently have for yourself? What do you feel will help or hurt your ability to achieve those goals/hopes?
- c. I'd like to back up a bit now, if you don't mind...What was your family or living situation like growing up? Who else was in the home? Where did you live? Moved a lot or not? What did family/caregivers do for a living?
- d. Going back as far as you can remember, can you describe what your relationship with your parents/caregivers was like growing up?
 - i. Are there specific ways in which they supported you? Held you back?
 - ii. How have these relationships changed over time?
- e. Could you describe other important relationships that you had while growing up (e.g., siblings, peers, mentors)?
 - i. What did those relationships mean to you?
 - ii. Are there specific ways in which they helped you? Held you back?
 - iii. How have your other close relationships changed over time?

- f. Could you describe what your communities/neighborhoods were like growing up (e.g., schools, churches/ spirituality, law enforcement, other community agencies)?
 - i. What did those communities and specific places mean to you?
 - ii. Are there specific ways in which they supported you or held you back?
 - iii. How has your connection/relationship to your community/neighborhood changed over time?

- g. How would have described yourself or how you felt about yourself while growing up?
 - i. Were there certain characteristics about yourself that you would identify as strengths growing up? Traits that held you back?
 - ii. How has this changed over time?

- h. Besides challenges presently faced due to being homeless, have you had any other experiences that were really trying, difficult to get through, or potentially traumatic?
 - i. What helped (or hindered) your ability to work through that or bounce back?

- i. Based on what we have spoken about today, is there anything else that has come up that you would like me to know about your experiences?

APPENDIX G

**PHOTO-ELICITATION INSTRUCTIONS
AND QUESTIONS**

PHOTO-ELICITATION INSTRUCTIONS AND QUESTIONS

Project Title: Counter-Narratives of Adults who are Homeless: Attachment and Resiliency in Context
 Researcher: Jeffrey D. Roche, B.A. Psychology and Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Doctoral Student, Counseling Psychology, University of Northern Colorado
 E-mail: roche.unco@gmail.com Advisor: Dr. Basilia Softas-Nall Phone: 970-351-1631

Participant Instructions:

You are being asked to use this digital camera to take pictures of what you feel makes up your community. Try to take pictures of things you believe captures:

- Important parts of your community or environment.
- What helps you out or supports you in your community.
- What holds you back or harms you in your community.
- How you feel towards the community.
- How you believe the community views you.

Please no pictures of:

- Your face
- Other people's faces

Feel free to review, edit, or delete picture if you are not happy with the image(s). After a set length of time, I will collect the camera from you, and we will work together to decide which pictures to print (and decide if you want copies of the pictures). After I print the pictures, I will interview you about the photographs for additional thoughts. Below are some more general instructions:

- There are no right or wrong answers. Go with what stands out or seems important to you.
 - Feel free to get creative!
 - Feel free to take pictures both indoors and outdoors.
 - Remember that I will be asking you about the pictures later on.

Follow-up Interview Questions:

1. Could you walk me through the various pictures you took?
 - a. What stands out to you the most?
2. Are there any connections or themes among the various pictures?
3. Is there anything in these photographs that stands out to you as it relates to your present situation?
 - a. How does it impact your current outlook?
4. Were there any images that you did not capture or could not capture due to the restrictions?
 - a. If so, tell me about what you would have captured and what your reflections were.

APPENDIX H

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
APPROVAL LETTER**



Institutional Review Board

DATE: March 3, 2014

TO: Jeffrey Roche

FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [539989-1] Counter-Narratives of Adults who are Homeless: Attachment and Resiliency in Context

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: March 3, 2014

EXPIRATION DATE: March 3, 2015

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of March 3, 2015.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

I commend you on the thorough nature of your IRB application. I have no comments/criticisms/ revisions. All the best. Dr. Gary Heise

APPENDIX I
SITE PERMISSION FORM

SITE PERMISSION FORM

To the _____ Shelter Director,

Hello, my name is Jeff Roche and I am currently a fourth year Counseling Psychology doctoral student at the University of Northern Colorado. I am currently working on my qualitative doctoral dissertation. Qualitative research aims to gather a descriptive personal account of an experience of phenomena instead of using surveys or questionnaires that only provide numbers. I see this as an opportunity to learn from the group of people by allowing their voice and experience to provide rich information and guide the study.

I would like to partner with your site in conducting interviews with 4-6 willing residents of your shelter surrounding their experiences and photograph-based reflections regarding their community. In my dissertation I am looking to expand upon previous investigations by means of using additional in-depth interviews, considering context beyond the shelter, and comparing across sites. I am hoping to use a critical, social justice based lens to work with the respective residents in order to see how relational and resiliency themes have intertwined across their life.

This will be a formal study that will require me to have consent from each participant. I had to propose this study through my university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) that ensures the research method is appropriate and that the ethical treatment of participants is kept to a high standard of safety. I have copies of the research proposal, the consent form, as well as the questions I will be asking participants. At your request, I will give these documents to you for your review in deciding if you will allow me into your shelter for the purposes of my study.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please let me know if you need any additional information from me. I am available via e-mail (roche.unco@gmail.com). Please sign below in order to acknowledge your general comprehension of research objectives and to grant permission for the researcher to access participants and utilize an approved space at the _____ Shelter.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey D. Roche, B.A.
Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student
University of Northern Colorado

Supervisor's Signature

Date

APPENDIX J

MENTAL HEALTH REFERRALS

MENTAL HEALTH REFERRALS

National:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Denver Area Mental Health Centers:

Colorado Behavioral Healthcare
(303) 832-7594 • 1410 Grant St # A301, Denver, CO

Mental Health Corporation
(303) 831-4570 • 701 E. Colfax Ave, Denver, CO

Denver Behavioral Health Center
(303) 825-3371 • 1337 Delaware St, Denver, CO

Ft. Collins Area Mental Health Centers:

Touchstone Counseling Services/ Larimer Center For Mental Health (mental health and addiction); touchstonehealthpartners.org
(970) 221-5551 | 525 West Oak St, Ft. Collins, CO

Foundations Counseling, LLC (emotional, relational and marital distress);
www.foundationscounselingllc.com
(970) 227-2770 | 155 E. Boardwalk Dr., Ft. Collins, CO

Front Range Counseling and Mediation, PC;
www.frontrangecounselingandmediation.com
(970) 207-1368 | 3926 JFK Parkway, Suite 9E, Ft. Collins, CO

Greeley Area Mental Health Centers:

Psychological Services Clinic at the University of Northern Colorado
(970-351-1645) | McKee Hall, Rm. 248, Greeley, CO

North Range Behavioral Health (24-hour emergency phone services available)
(970) 347-2120 | 1300 North 17th Avenue, Greeley, CO

North Colorado Medical Center Behavioral Health
(970) 352-1056 | 928 12th Street, Greeley, CO

APPENDIX K

MANUSCRIPT FOR PUBLICATION

**COUNTER-NARRATIVES OF ADULTS WHO ARE HOMELESS:
ATTACHMENT AND RESILIENCY IN CONTEXT**

Abstract

The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to illustrate the contextualized, multifaceted life stories of individuals who are homeless by exploring the reciprocal influence between (a) attachment and (b) and resiliency themes. In-depth narratives were gathered from 13 adults who were currently homeless and residing in one of two transitional homeless shelters in the Rocky Mountain region. While participant narratives as a whole were stand-alone results for revealing stereotype-challenging counter-narrative elements, cross-narrative analysis was conducted to explore commonalities of themes. Nine tentative themes emerged: Plurality of Pathways, It is Scary to Become Homeless, Adversity and Resilience Abound, Individualized Coping Strategies, Catch-22 of Individual-Level Protective Factors, Secure Versus Insecure: Which is More Adaptive, Importance of Positive Attachment Ties, Importance of Community Response, and Context: Tangible and Relational Resources. Results were used to discuss implications for possible inroads for homelessness prevention and intervention, highlight strengths and protective factors that could be drawn on clinically, and develop a more layered and contextualized understanding of pathways into and current experiences of homelessness.

Keywords: attachment, context, counter-narratives, critical poverty theory, homeless, homelessness, narrative inquiry, qualitative study, resiliency

Introduction

According to the definition from the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, homelessness is defined as

[N]amely an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, or an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:

(a) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); (b) a public or private place that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or (c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.

(USC 42 §11302)

Based on this definition, the estimated number of individuals in the United States who are homeless on any given evening is 633,782 (National Alliance to End Homelessness [NAEH], 2013), with 1.6 million individuals making use of transitional housing programs or overnight shelters annually (Lee, Tyler, & Wright, 2010). Within those numbers, roughly 38% are people in families, 62% are individuals, and approximately 16% are individuals considered chronically homeless (i.e., multiply episodic or sustained periods of homelessness, often coinciding with a mental health condition or physical disability; NAEH, 2013).

Homelessness has been linked to many developmental, physical, and mental health problems (e.g., educational failure, adjustment difficulties, depression, schizophrenia, alcohol and drug issues, and anxiety; DeForge, Belcher, O'Rourke, &

Lindsey, 2008). From a structural standpoint, instability of living arrangements can create experiences of marginalization, which can in turn contribute to the at times subtle dehumanization of individuals (DeForge et al., 2008). Across the board (i.e., substance abuse, general health status, mental health, food insufficiency, chronic conditions), those who are homeless typically are challenged by chronic and emergent health conditions at greater odds than those of their housed counterparts (Lebrun-Harris et al., 2013).

Unfortunately for many individuals who are homeless in adulthood, the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs; e.g., experiences of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, loss, separations, poverty, community violence, etc.) is an altogether common experience (Larkin & Park, 2012; Torchalla, Strehlau, Li, Schuetz, & Krausz, 2012). In recent history, greater clarity has been gained due to correlations between experiences of ACEs and homelessness in adulthood (Larkin & Park, 2012). The self-trauma model (Briere, 2002) provides a more focal hypothesis regarding the impact of early maltreatment. In particular, the self-trauma model focuses on childhood maltreatment as it relates to disrupted and insecure attachment patterns, ongoing stress that generates negative internal working models for both self and others, and the adoption of what eventually become maladaptive patterns of emotional and interpersonal responding (Briere, 2002).

This self-trauma model (Briere, 2002) is consistent with the postulates of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988). While one's attachment style is certainly an emotionally learned response to the environment, Bowlby (1977) postulated it might become further entrenched through the vicious cycle of insecure attachment or self-reinforcing nature of secure attachment. Yet it can be difficult, and perhaps not desirable,

to try to parcel out these experiences from the broader context of a negative social environment marked by forces that underlie poverty and social class (Tsai, Edens, & Rosenheck, 2011). As Edidin, Ganim, Hunter, and Karnik (2011) observed, there is often a reciprocal relationship among early experiences of homelessness, trauma, and the effects of increased marginalization. Such a finding points toward the potential benefits of exploring contextualized narratives in depth for themes of attachment and resiliency.

Psychologists have become increasingly aware of the early life experiences and relationships thought to serve as major precursive risk factors for homelessness. In 2009, the APA developed a task force designed to work toward ending homelessness with a particular focus on identifying and addressing psychological factors and conditions thought to underlie homelessness while striving to better define the role and improve the involvement of psychologists in ending the phenomenon. Many become homeless for various reasons; yet not all become chronically or even episodically homeless. Although, as noted by the APA, much of the literature on homelessness focuses on those who are chronically homeless rather than the majority of the population who only experience briefer episodes (National Coalition for the Homeless [NCH], 2009). While prior research has been helpful for illuminating demographic shifts, risk factors for entering into or remaining homeless, and highlighting substance abuse and other mental health concerns, such efforts are often deficit-based and demonstrate a distinct failure when looking for strengths (APA, 2009). As a result, the APA has encouraged researchers to examine protective and resiliency factors as a means of reducing the length and consequences of homelessness.

Bonanno (2004) observed a shortcoming in the resiliency literature was researchers' exploration of resiliency as though it were an inherent, relatively fixed personality trait. Resiliency theory has been advanced beyond the consideration of inherent or stagnant traits the rare individual possesses to buffer adversity as though he/she was covered in Teflon. More modern conceptualizations of resiliency cast it as a commonplace or ordinary process of responding adaptively to adverse circumstances, often by drawing from individual, familial, and communal protective factors (Bonanno, 2004; Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002). Protective factors (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten & Reed, 2002) have been found to encompass relationships, circumstances, resources, as well as characteristics or qualities that help mitigate distress either through prevention or assistance during a time of need.

Thus, there was a need to examine individuals' contexts (APA, 2009; Bronfenbrenner, 1979) for what serves as protective factors over time. But again, there has been a lack of studies that simultaneously examine individual, social, and contextual factors, let alone over time or across contexts (Brown, Kallivayalil, Mendelsohn, & Harvey, 2012; Herrman et al., 2011). Just as there are multiple and sometimes unexpected pathways to resilience, one might find that over time and across contexts, certain coping strategies and use of resources might not be adaptive later (Bonanno, 2004; McNulty & Fincham, 2012). Brown et al. (2012) referred to this as the braiding process, such that formerly adaptive means of responding with resilience are less effective in the present. A compulsive overreliance on certain strategies in an inflexible manner might be construed as reflecting an area of concern; after all, one must be able to see resilience in pathology and pathology in the resilience (Brown et al., 2012).

As protective and risk factors interact in very complex ways within and across contexts, one must bear in mind that someone who does not respond in a resilient manner does not warrant reactions of blaming or shaming. One must consider both risk and protective factors when looking at exposure to adversity and the presence (or lack thereof) of positive adjustment (Tedeschi & Kilmer, 2005). Indeed, a risk of the resiliency literature was an overemphasis on the individual to the neglect of larger systemic factors impeding growth, development, and healthy adaptation. As Davis (2014) poignantly opined,

Why must so many poor people and individuals of color be so skilled, so talented, so adaptive, or—as in the case mentioned earlier—so hard headed? Our efforts to promote strength and resiliency models seem to have blurred our vision and taken our eyes off of the big picture, which is to reduce suffering by promoting greater social justice and societal equity. (p. 5)

As there are indications that both attachment and resiliency should be considered complementary theories (Atwool, 2006), it made sense to explore how one's attachment style, internal working models, and attachment figures impacted the ability to navigate the environment prior to, transitioning to, and during an episode of homelessness. The consideration of secure base behavior (Bowlby, 1988; Johnson, 2007) might be relevant for adults who are currently homeless as active experiences of attachment threat (Mikulincer, Shaver, Sapir-Lavid, & Avihou-Kanza, 2009) from negative interpersonal and environmental encounters might inhibit one's ability to navigate resources and needed services. Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) pointed to attachment theory as a lifespan theory that starts in childhood, is fairly stable, but can adapt in response to other

relationships and contexts (Levenson, 1995; Siegel, 2001; Teyber & McClure, 2011).

Yet only a limited number of studies have adopted a lifespan examination for homelessness, let alone with considerations of attachment and resiliency, despite indications that this might be promising (Hauser, Golden, & Allen, 2006).

Through this inquiry, I explored how themes of attachment and resiliency interwove the narratives of adults who are currently homeless (e.g., which relationships, contexts, factors, etc. promote or inhibit more resilient responding, and how this evolved over time). As such, I investigated the ways in which homeless adults' attachment and resiliency-based contextualized narratives shed light on their pathway into, adaptation to, and current outlook regarding their present state of homelessness. More specifically, I investigated the degree and manner in which the cumulative, subjective impact that one's childhood and adult attachment history, individual and systemic risk/protective factors history, and perceived relationship to their community had on the outlook of adults who were currently experiencing some level of homelessness.

Methodology

This investigation was aligned epistemologically with the critical paradigm (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005; Mertens, 2010). This critical paradigm philosophically grounded my chosen methodology of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). According to Pinnegar and Daynes (2006), a narrative might not only be the method of investigation, it could also be the phenomenon one examines. Creswell (2007) stated that inquiry focused on narratives "may be guided by a theoretical lens" (p. 55). In addition to attachment and resiliency theories, this investigation drew heavily from the emerging, yet limited area of critical poverty theory (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010).

In part, critical poverty theory posits, “The hegemonic narrative...reflects and creates stigmatized and punitive representations of people in poverty” while asserting the utility of “counter-narratives that try to challenge these reductionist images: the structural/contextual counter-narrative, the agency/resistance counter-narrative, and the counter-narrative of voice and action” (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010, p. 693). The structure/context counter-narrative disrupts the attribution of individual inferiority (e.g., this person is lazy or incompetent) by observing the more systemic factors that are uncontrollable to the individual yet influence one’s poverty or homelessness. Agency/resistance counter-narratives challenge affronts to individuals’ motivation or volition by asserting that individual life choices and paths are more often reflective of adaptive responses to adverse circumstances. Lastly, the voice/action counter-narrative removes barriers to voice by allowing individuals’ strengths, alternative perspectives, and inherent wisdom to emerge in protest of the dominant narratives regarding their susceptibility and deficits (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). Hauser et al. (2006) observed that narratives are well suited for the study of resiliency given their ability to draw on how attitudes, thoughts, and feelings reciprocally interact with the experience of adversity.

Participants

Within this investigation, I focused predominantly on individuals who were first time or episodically homeless (Nooe & Patterson, 2010) because such individuals comprise the largest subset of individuals who are homeless, especially within shelter settings (Morrell-Bellai, Goering, & Boydell, 2000). Given the particulars of this investigation, certain participant delimitations were put in place. All participants met the criteria of being English-speaking, non-veteran, adults of all ages capable of providing

consent, not in the immediate aftermath or midst of a violent situation, not the sole caretaker for minor children in the shelter, and in a current homelessness status defined as a state of needing to utilize the resources of a homelessness shelter for lodging for the duration of data collection.

Participants were recruited from two religiously affiliated transitional homeless shelters from two different communities in the Rocky Mountain region (i.e., one more urban/metropolitan and the other on the outskirts of a rural, midsized city with varying political and economic climates). Varying locales were used to have a better understanding of the reciprocal influence of diverse perceived contexts on participants' narratives. Thirteen participants were recruited with whom I reached the point of saturation (Merriam, 1998; Morrow, 2005) regarding thematic elements of attachment and resiliency. Table 1 provides a summary of participants' demographic characteristics.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity/ Race	Highest Level of Education	Employment Status	Relational Status	Number of Homeless Episodes	Length of Current Episode	Total Time Homeless
Kay*	58	Female	White	High school, Some college classes	Unemployed	Single, Divorced	1	2 weeks	2 weeks
Spencer**	26	Male	White	Some college classes	Full-time	Single, Divorced	1	2 months	2 months
Scooter*	36	Male	White	GED, 1 year of college	Unemployed	Single	25	6 months	14 years
DeBroncos*	49	Male	White	Associate's Degree	Unemployed	Single	2	1.5 years	4 years
Jade**	34	Female	White, Choctaw, German	GED, 1.5 years of college	Part-time	Married,	1	1.5 months	1.5 months
Christina*	41	Female	Multi-racial (French, Sioux, Spanish, Mexican)	7 th grade	Unemployed	Dating	4 or 5	5-6 months	4 years (approx.)
Cancerman**	49	Male	White	10 th grade	Social Security Disability Insurance	Single	1	1 month	1 month
Black**	31	Male	Hispanic	GED	Full-time	Married	3	4 months	1 year
B.P.*	40	Male	Jewish, White	High school, Some college classes	Social Security Disability Insurance	Single	4	16 months	10 years
Blue**	50	Female	White	GED, 1 year of college	Unemployed	Single	5	9 months	3-4 years
James**	44	Male	Spanish, Mayan, White	2.5 years of college	Part-time	Single	2	5 months	7 months
Vernon**	49	Male	White	Bachelor's Degree	Unemployed	Single	1	1 year	1 year
Snickers*	51	Female	White	3 years of college	Full-time	Single	2	4 weeks	5 months

*Participant was residing in urban shelter.

**Participant was residing in rural shelter.

Procedures

After obtaining site permission, participants were recruited during shelter resident meetings by means of purposeful criterion and convenience methods of sampling (Polkinghorne, 2005). Payment in kind (Schonfeld, Brown, Weniger, & Gordon, 2003), current minimum wage rates, and anticipated length of research involvement were taken into account with participant remuneration decisions. Payments were staggered contingent upon task completion (i.e., \$30 following the completion of the structured and photo-elicitation interviews, as well as \$20 following participation in the member-check process) and presented in the form of gift cards. Following the informed consent process, participants selected a pseudonym of their choice for use in this investigation. Participants were provided a list of nearby, low to no cost mental health services should they have found themselves too emotionally overburdened by the research process and no current access to mental health services. Data collection predominantly took place in private rooms in each respective shelter although some participants requested to have interviews take place outside on or nearby shelter grounds. Participants were worked with individually to coordinate sequencing and scheduling of tasks.

Participants first completed a structured interview that explored homelessness experiences, attachment relationships, and risk/protective factors across their narratives. As participants responded to question prompts, I informally generated a timeline and placed their annals of experiences, memories, and relationships, as well as their chronicles around particular topics (e.g., attachment and resiliency themes) in chronologically and contextually appropriate locations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Next, a participant-driven, photo-elicitation project (Ortega-Alcázar & Dyck, 2012)

allowed participants to document, contextualize, and reflect on images captured in a follow-up interview. Participants were provided with digital cameras (a few elected to utilize their personal cell phones). Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher, read repeatedly, and narratively coded to look for significant statements, major turning points, and matters of continuity (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Prolonged setting and participant engagement, observational data, and a concurrent audit trail and reflexivity journal were used to allow for thick descriptions and enhance trustworthiness.

Data Analysis

Triangulation (Denzin, 1970) of multiple data sources including demographic questionnaires, verbatim transcripts from structured interviews and participant-driven photo-elicitation projects, photographs, field texts, observational data from prolonged setting and participant engagement, and in-interview generated timelines was utilized in the process of data analysis. While it was difficult to generalize across narratives, cross-narrative analysis (Merriam, 1998) was conducted to explore common or overlapping themes across individual narratives. After going through the narrative deconstructive process of “restorying” (Creswell, 2007, p. 56), transcripts and field texts were read and reread in order to more holistically comprehend the narratives. From there, significant statements were located within the transcripts of each participant, or intra-narrative analysis, which allowed me to begin developing clusters of meaning and form statements into themes (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998).

Re-storied narratives were examined and scoured for non-theoretical, attachment, and resiliency-relevant themes while maintaining relevant contextual details such as time,

place, plot, and scene, and keeping potential counter-narrative elements in mind (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). Individual narrative themes were compared and contrasted as part of the cross-narrative analysis. Based on the process of looking across narratives for moments of thematic resonance and discordance, tentative assertions from this cross-narrative analysis are presented here as they relate to the overall relevance of attachment and resiliency theory, context, and counter-narrative elements.

Trustworthiness

Following the re-storying process of narrative construction, all participants were invited to participate in a member-checking process that involved a collaborative review of re-storied narratives and intra-narrative emergent themes. The member-check process was designed to ensure accurate and resonant portrayal of their narratives, balance power, and debrief from the interview process overall (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Seven of the 13 participants took part in the member-checking phase of the research process by verifying the accuracy and resonance of their narrative portrayal and intra-narrative themes while providing minor content-based or interpretive revisions. While all but one participant expressed interest in participating in the member-check process, the other six participants remained lost at follow-up due to time lags in the data analysis process, changes in life circumstances, mental health concerns, and the seemingly avoidant attachment dynamics of a handful of these unaccounted for participants. Trustworthiness was further enhanced through use of peer checking (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) with a methodologically-informed counseling psychology doctoral student who had taken multiple courses in qualitative research methods. The peer checking process involved

both independent and collaborative review of my procedures for data collection, transcription, coding, triangulation, re-storied narratives, thematic analysis, and representation.

Results

As each participant's narrative could serve as a stand-alone article of its own accord, the focus here was on the nine tentative and broad themes that emerged from the cross-narrative analysis. Table 2 provides a snapshot of the primary precursive and sustaining factors contributing to participants' homelessness found in this study.

Table 2

Factors Related and Contributing to Homelessness

Participant	Adverse Childhood Experiences*	Relational Disruption**	Other Mental Health Concerns***	Juvenile Justice Involvement	Jail/ Prison Time	Substance Use History	Disability/ Health Concerns	Recent Job Loss
Kay	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Spencer	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Scooter	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
DeBroncos	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Jade	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Christina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Cancerman	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Black	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
B.P.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Blue	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
James	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Vernon	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Snickers	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

* Including but not limited to physical, sexual or emotional abuse; neglect; witnessing domestic violence; parental mental health and/or substance use concerns; and/or harassment.

** Indicates presence of divorce/end of significant relationship; relationship violence; death of parent/caregiver; estrangement of parent or child; and/or complicated bereavement.

*** Self-reported by participants.

Plurality of Pathways

When inquiring into the participants' perspectives on how they believed they had become homeless, currently and with previous episodes (where relevant), it quickly became evident no single or simple understanding was sufficient. Indeed, it became apparent that a plurality of pathways into homelessness had been traversed by participants with both individual and systemic-level influences impacting them. For most participants, it was an intersection of multiple factors over their life course that contributed to their pathway into homelessness. While more acute stressors directly contributed to some participants' homelessness, most narratives suggested there had been an accumulation of risk factors that contributed to pathways into homelessness. To illustrate this cumulative effect on pathways into homelessness, an abbreviated version of Kay's narrative follows.

Kay spoke to the damaging influences of her parents' substance use and highly abusive behavior, particularly as they related to the impact on her connection to the outside world. As she said, "I had noooo connection to normal. Didn't spend the night with friends, weren't allowed to do that. Probably because you would have figured it out sooner." Having compensated for those dynamics by being a high-achiever, Kay relayed how she felt fairly poorly about herself on account of her experiences at home and the bullying she experienced from peers: "I musta been hideous. That's all I know. Ugly duckling. Tiny, scrawny, buck teeth, reddish hair, freckles, or teeth-missing freckles, you know, just ugly." While Kay had some relational buffers along the way, she found her adult life was largely marked by work and a series of relational "train wrecks" that eventually led to her closing off everyone else besides her daughter. Increasingly isolated

and without supports, Kay found herself struck between a rock and a hard place when the bottom fell out of the mortgage business. Suspecting that some of her present difficulties in employment related to age discrimination, Kay relayed, “So it’s like, if you don’t have a following, you know, if you don’t walk in the door making them money, it’s like I’m a dinosaur.” Although her transition to homelessness was challenging, Kay acknowledged much of this shift was due to factors outside of her control: “It’s not like I was spending the rent money on laying up in the streets somewhere. But I just simply lost my job and they kept our commissions, and that’s it! You know? I know I’m not alone.”

It is Scary to Become Homeless

Regardless of how they got there, one thing was fairly clear for a number of participants—it is scary to become homeless. Many were challenged in their efforts to cope, whether it was their sense of shock, disillusionment, or betrayal; frantic efforts to find and navigate resources; the impact on their sense of self; the need to negotiate between short and long-term priorities; or the unexpected costs of homelessness.

Adversity and Resilience Abound

Many participants’ narratives were littered with potentially traumatic experiences they had had to endure and overcome. For some, the process of bouncing back has taken longer than others; yet, regardless, all continued to persevere. Despite the myriad setbacks participants had endured, most had pursued at least some higher education; were generally intelligent, resourceful, and hard-working; and several had been home owners, caretakers, parents, and/or had successful careers. With the aid of the transitional homeless shelters where they stayed, many were actively working to re-establish themselves while remaining aware of the fact their margin for error was small.

Individualized Coping Strategies

Much like their pathways into homelessness, the manner in which participants coped with their present circumstances and the various hardships they had come across in life were diverse. For some, the ability to respond with resilience to their current homelessness has been enhanced by developing or getting back in touch with individualized coping strategies including spiritual coping, developing an attitude of gratitude, having a here-and-now focus with a simultaneous goal-centered focus, maintaining a sense of purpose while reframing encounters as learning experiences, wanting to give back, utilizing identity-based hierarchy strategies, and other more idiosyncratic coping.

Catch-22 of Individual-Level Protective Factors

While many participants had found individualized ways to cope with traumatic experiences and a history of relational disruptions, several had run into drawbacks of overly relying on themselves. Such a survivor mentality had adaptive elements, particularly when participants had been in more extreme environments, yet posed drawbacks when trying to negotiate their way out of homelessness. Several participants noted the learning curve for learning to reach out, access, and appropriately utilize supports was steep with some reporting the need to overcome feelings of shame and “swallow pride.”

Secure Versus Insecure: Which is More Adaptive?

Although the rigid over-application of certain individual-level coping strategies was not helpful for many participants, it was important to consider the contexts and ways in which it still served some individuals. At the same time, while more secure patterns of

relating were generally thought to be advantageous, some found the need to negotiate their approach to relationships in light of their present circumstances. Namely, more secure individuals discussed having a harder time with giving too much of themselves or feeling taken advantage of by others while homeless. Meanwhile, more insecure individuals struggled less with this matter. Thus, the question posed within this theme was answered: the adaptive nature of secure versus more insecure attachment styles appeared to depend on the surrounding context and relationships and, therefore, might change over time.

Importance of Positive Attachment Ties

Some participants were privileged with having numerous supportive attachment ties across their lifetime; this was certainly not the case for everyone. Yet despite the prominence of harmful relational experiences, relational disruptions, and periods of isolation present for most participants, all were able to identify the presence of positive attachment ties somewhere along the way (e.g., extended family, friends, teachers, coaches, mentors, and more). As participants reflected on the importance of such ties, it became apparent that even a short-lived positive connection could have a meaningful and lasting impact on their levels of hope, sense of self, and self-efficacy. Many participants noted a desire to reconcile with family was a source of motivation.

Importance of Community Response

As impactful (positively or negatively) as familial and other intimate relationships could be for participants, so too were their experiences of support (or lack thereof) from their broader communities. Numerous participants spoke to the uplifting impact of knowing and encountering everyday people who conveyed care, gave of their time, and

gave of their hearts. At the same time, some participants spoke to how they struggled when they were met with oppressive or judgmental responses from their communities.

Context: Tangible and Relational Resources

When homeless, one can experience a sense of need across any number of domains. As this research was conducted at two different homeless shelters and many participants had experienced homelessness in more than one community, some tentative thoughts around the impact of tangible and relational resources that were found (or not) in different contexts emerged. Participants varied in their sense of whether or not they felt their communities possessed the requisite resources to meet their various needs. Several participants were fairly critical about the quality and access to appropriate mental and physical health care as well as other forms of social services. Concerns were exaggerated for many on account of not having insurance, dealing with ballooning medical expenses, lacking transportation, and, at times, feeling discriminated against. In general, participants from the smaller rural city spoke to the challenges of comparatively limited resources, worse transportation systems, and more routine exposure to negative peers as opposed to prosocial outlets. Meanwhile, those from the larger metropolitan area tended to speak more about the availability of resources, the quality transportation system, and the visible community support toward those who are homeless.

Discussion

While participants' pathways into homelessness indicated a broad lens might have greater utility than a narrow lens for understanding their circumstances, their narratives around their entrance into homelessness were largely consistent with overarching findings from the pathways literature, particularly those of Chamberlain and Johnson

(2013). Chamberlain and Johnson identified four primary pathways into homelessness: housing crisis, family breakdown, substance use and mental health, and youth to adult. What was also evident, and what could be gleaned by reading across the columns of Table 2, was many participants experienced multiple precipitant stressors that either directly contributed to or preceded their homelessness. Like Taylor-Seehafer, Jacobvitz, and Steiker (2008), this investigation revealed a range of abusive, neglectful, and disrupted attachment relationships had often preceded subsequent substance abuse, criminal behavior, and maladaptive decisions. Of note was the prevalence of relational disruptions preceding many participants' pathways into homelessness as well as the relative dearth of current attachment ties. While current attachment ties and patchwork social networks existed for some participants, most were limited in scope, rebuilding, or entirely absent.

Several participants' narratives overlapped with more than one common pathway identified by Chamberlain and Johnson (2013). Cornes, Manthorpe, Joly, and O'Halloran (2014) referred to the accumulation of additive risk factors as multiple exclusion homelessness. They argued that individuals who present in such a fashion might require a more personalized and well-networked approach to help support their reintegration efforts. As Patterson, Markey, and Somers (2012) found by co-creating developmental timelines with individuals who were homeless, I too found that in the face of chronic inequity, there was evidence of many negative risk factors (e.g., negative or disrupted attachment relationships), the accumulation of increased levels of risk, and experiences of marginalization over time for many participants.

It is now commonly known that the cascade of both structural and individual factors converge to cause and further marginalize those who are homeless (APA, 2009). Many participants in the present investigation were able to name some meso- or macro-systemic barriers that had affected them over time, which tends to be the case with people who are lower-income (Godfrey & Wolf, 2015) but most also tended to engage in higher levels of self-blame. For instance, a few participants spoke to the impact of government-based decisions with universal health care, access to education, insufficient minimum wage levels, the process of applying for disability, and efforts that displace individuals who are homeless.

Much like the pathways literature and Herrman et al.'s (2011) claim that there are plenty of inroads for fostering resilient responses, so too did participants here exhibit myriad, individualized forms of coping with adversity related to their present circumstances and beyond. Like the individual-level protective factors identified by Brown et al. (2012) and Herrman et al. (2011), participants here exhibited varying combinations of openness, positive cognitive appraisal, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, optimism, higher intellectual functioning, active coping, and the ability to integrate experiences of adversity into a coherent narrative. Participants also displayed some of the broad individual-level characteristics conducive for resilient responding identified by Bonanno (2004): aspects of hardiness, self-enhancement, repressive coping, and positive affect. The emergence of such individual-level factors aligned with the voice/action counter-narrative (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010) as individuals' unique strengths, alternative perspectives, and inherent wisdoms became apparent, directly

challenging some of the dominant narratives surrounding their emphasized susceptibility and deficits.

As both Davis (2014) and McNulty and Fincham (2012) have appropriately cautioned, one must consider seemingly adaptive traits and processes in context as certain coping strategies can become maladaptive across time, context, and application. The rigid application of formerly adaptive behaviors across relationships and contexts might contribute to certain maladaptive, non-resilient behaviors (Bonanno, 2004; Levenson, 1995; Teyber & McClure, 2011). Such patterns were observed for many of the participants in this investigation, particularly as they related to periods where participants had an over-reliance on individual-level protective factors and self-sufficiency, self-destructive escape, as well as avoidance and emotional stifling (Nyamathi et al., 2012). Like had been identified by Cleverly and Kidd (2011), several participants found their often adaptive reliance on intrapersonal coping strategies became less helpful in the face of myriad risk factors and the greater adversity they faced upon becoming homeless.

Yet as Brown et al. (2012) alluded to in their description of the braiding process, it is helpful to consider both the adaptive and maladaptive natures of a given behavior. The self-trauma model (Briere, 2002) and notions of cyclical maladaptive patterns (Levenson, 1995) seemingly provided a helpful overlay for understanding the lasting impact of many participants' negative or mixed relational history with caregivers. In accordance with the secure base script (Mikulincer et al., 2009), many participants seemingly learned to decrease/deactivate their attachment behavior strategies and became increasingly self-reliant in the face of repeated letdowns. Rather than risk rejection, the more avoidant participants likely learned to attenuate their needs (Bowlby, 1988;

Mikulincer et al., 2009). Such strategies might have served participants well at certain points yet, as Bowlby noted (1973), became increasingly maladaptive when it came time to pursue future relationships or turn to others for support to contend with their homelessness.

Some authors have started challenging the presumed adaptive nature of secure attachment styles when it came time to respond resiliently to adverse circumstances. Attachment, resiliency, and context were considered here in a more layered, dynamic manner. Like others before (Fraley & Bonanno, 2004; Mancini & Bonanno, 2009), some of the more avoidant participants had indeed found ways to cope and respond resiliently following various losses in their lifetimes. Similar to the mixed findings between Karreman and Vingerhoets (2012) and Caldwell and Shaver (2012), participants like Cancerman and Snickers, who reported more secure attachments in childhood, displayed inconsistent patterns of emotional regulation later on. In many ways, this investigation revealed that when it came to the relative advantage of secure versus insecure patterns of attachment, it depended.

Indeed, the contexts of both adverse relational histories and homelessness seemingly forced a number of participants to behave in some ways that appeared maladaptive on the surface but were actually an initially resilient, adaptive, survival instinct (Barker, 2013). Many participants commented on the many subtle and not so subtle ways in which they and others who are homeless were frequently demonized, marginalized, or forgotten. Appio, Chambers, and Mao (2013) also discussed how such negative experiences with stereotypes and social stigmatization are unfortunately common. As Fiske (2010) demonstrated through her stereotype content model, those

who are homeless are frequently perceived to be low in both warmth and competence dimensions and met with reactions of disgust. Efforts to cope in the face of adverse childhood experiences and social exclusion were refrains consistent with aspects of the agency/resistance counter-narrative (Krumer-Nevo & Benjamin, 2010). Such lines of thought point to the potential value in adopting an empathic stance that allows one to consider the origins of such behaviors; conversely, as Paradis (2000) opined, failure to do so perpetuates stereotypes and leads to ill-informed service provision.

Further support was provided for postulations that both attachment and resiliency should be considered complementary theories (Atwool, 2006; Masten, 2007) with attachment dynamics providing a clearer understanding of how resiliency could unfold over time and that such considerations are relevant for research on homelessness. For instance and as was found here, Atwool (2006) theorized secure attachment in adulthood might allow one to reach out to as opposed to avoid or alienate one's social support. Exploration helped allow for more empathic perspectives on insecure attachment and subsequent maladaptive coping strategies to emerge. It was also revealed many participant behaviors were contextually appropriate and adaptive in many respects. At the same time, the ability of many seemingly insecure participants to grow, change, and learn to draw from familial and communal supports over time was consistent with more contemporary thinking on attachment theory (Levenson, 1995; Ludolph & Bow, 2012; Teyber & McClure, 2011).

The nine cross-narrative themes identified in this investigation could be directly applied to the practice of counseling psychologists and others who work with the population of adults who are homeless. Specifically, providers are advised to recognize

and empathize with the fact that there are multiple, additive, and sometimes unexpected pathways to homelessness. Furthermore, the entry into and experience of homelessness can often be traumatic, temporarily disorienting, and at times scary; this finding pointed to the need to not only provide information regarding resources but to also provide a sense of safety and stability.

It is important for mental health providers to be mindful of and prepared to work through myriad forms of adversity likely encountered by those who have experienced homelessness while also recognizing the many ways in which resiliency has been enacted over time. Toward this end, fostering and enhancing coping skills, such as those (e.g., spirituality, attitude of gratitude, identity hierarchy) successfully utilized by these participants, could help better prepare individuals for dealing with homelessness and to work toward re-establishing housing stability. At the same time, providers would be wise to recognize the potential catch-22 of individual coping strategies such as when extreme self-reliance prevents one from being able to take advantage of functional and relational resources. It is essential for counseling psychologists to take individuals' attachment style dynamics into account as both might play out in adaptive and maladaptive ways depending on the context.

In light of the finding that positive attachment ties had myriad buffering and corrective benefits and knowing that many individuals who are homeless might experience a lack of such ties, it is imperative to help such individuals rebuild positive ties and assist them in developing support networks. Relatedly, knowing the benefits derived from prosocial support in the community is important for counseling psychologists and affiliated allies to help connect individuals with positive community

members while advocating for larger-scale attitudinal change toward those who are homeless. Findings related to the community might be especially important for providers working in more rural or resource-deficient areas as individuals might experience greater difficulty accessing adequate care and connection.

The cross-narrative themes that emerged in this study are critical for counseling psychologists and relevant stakeholders to consider when working with those who are formerly homeless, currently homeless, or at-risk for homelessness. As such, a client's housing status should be part of a routine inquiry. Moreover, mental health providers should be on the lookout for and respond accordingly to the factors related and contributing to homelessness identified in Table 2.

Future Directions

This investigation addressed an apparent gap in the literature by having considered the contextualized narratives of individuals who were at various stages of homelessness (i.e., first time, episodic, or chronic) in order to better understand their experiences, their strengths and protective factors, and how attachment dynamics had played out as a precursor to and moderating factor for homelessness in both adaptive and maladaptive ways. This gap was important to address for counseling psychologists and relevant stakeholders as has illuminated possible points of intervention prior to or in the midst of homelessness, provided a more empathic and holistic understanding of pathways to homelessness, and given a better sense of the interaction among perceived protective or risk factors, attachment relationships, and contexts over time. Such strengths-based and empathic considerations might be helpful for establishing trust (Poremski, Whitley,

& Latimer, 2015), forging appropriate therapeutic alliances, and overcoming mistrust or fears of being viewed as someone who needs to be “fixed” (Petrovich & Cronley, 2015).

Vasquez (2012) identified poverty and homelessness as particular areas of concern since one in five U.S. children are currently impoverished with half a million homeless overall. Since theories surrounding social justice are intimately connected with human rights such as the right to basic needs, a decent standard of living, education, and medical attention, counseling psychologists ought to aspire to improve public policy and thereby others’ daily living, be willing and able to engage others in difficult conversations, and to always remember that doing nothing *is* taking action (Vasquez, 2012). Being able to work competently with those who are homeless, in poverty, or from varying socioeconomic social classes is an essential component of multicultural competence (APA, 2003; Staab & Reimers, 2013). Appio et al. (2013) observed a need to address the experience of those in therapy who are impoverished and/or homeless as it relates to differences in social class, financial concerns, shaming potential, the impact of internalized classism, as well as the need to develop trust, address concrete concerns, and willingness to explore relevant strengths and resources.

Results have illustrated possible inroads for homelessness prevention and intervention work (e.g., advocacy around structural inequalities, working through complex feelings of shame, grief, and mistrust), highlighted strengths and protective factors that could be drawn on clinically, and developed a more layered and contextualized understanding of pathways into and current experiences of homelessness. Ultimately, participants’ counter-narratives could be used to help advocate, educate the public and the profession, and challenge implicit attitudes. As leaders in the community

with specialized knowledge bases and skillsets, counseling psychologists are uniquely positioned to provide public education that challenges media portrayals and stereotypes, improves public perceptions, and improves service delivery. If certain protective factors could be enhanced and resilient pathways could be fostered, positive adaptation might appear in the form of increased social competence, behavioral success at varying developing mental tasks, and so forth. Common approaches to enhancing resiliency potential involve the reduction of risks, the increase of resources, and a process-focused approach (i.e., focusing on matters of attachment, self-regulation, and self-efficacy; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). As encouraged by the APA (2009) and Bronfenbrenner (1979), providers would be wise to expand their conceptual lens beyond the micro-level, which appeared relevant here as presently and over the life course, participants drew strength from or struggled with larger systems of influence.

Interventions with individuals who are homeless must take into account possible adverse traumas, insecure patterns of relatedness, and be attuned to social support dynamics. As noted by Rodell, Benda, and Rodell (2003), many interventions fail by not attending to the “adverse feelings that stem from early experiences in childhood that may impede efforts to overcome addiction and engage in employment” (p.70). In order to draw on strengths, Rodell et al. suggested individuals who are homeless might benefit from “learning how to express feelings and thoughts openly and to develop trust in others and to feel secure with them” (p. 70). In light of the findings around how the accumulation of adverse childhood experiences contributed to earlier entry into homelessness and greater levels of substance use (Tsai et al., 2011), this finding pointed to the need to target such experiences as a point of intervention with trauma-informed

care (Herman, 1997). Many participants also appeared to have been contending with matters related to complex grief (recent or long-standing) they might benefitted from addressing. This also pointed to the potentially unique role of interpersonal approaches to counseling with an explicit focus on matters of grief/loss, role transitions, interpersonal disputes, and interpersonal deficits, and how they might be particularly well-suited for clinical interventions with this population (Klerman, Weissman, Rounsaville, & Chevron, 1984; Teyber & McClure, 2011).

Ultimately, my hope would be for counseling psychologists, other mental health professionals, and outreach workers to read this research and say the following: A careful systemic examination and discussion of protective/risk factors and attachment-relevant material across the lifespan might prove useful in my work with clients who are either homeless or at-risk for homelessness. Also, an attachment perspective might help me better understand my client's worldview while an exploration of resiliency processes might cast my client in a more agentic/capable, humanistic light with internal and external strengths that could be utilized therapeutically. Lastly, it is important to consider the reciprocal influence between the individual and his/her immediate and broader contexts. This might be useful in determining what barriers there might be to accessing resources (if present to begin with), understanding and counteracting potentially oppressive forces in the environment, as well as developing a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which certain behaviors have been both adaptive and maladaptive depending on the context.

References

- American Psychological Association. (2009). Helping people without homes: The role of psychologists and recommendations to advance research, training, practice, and policy. *Report of the APA Presidential Task Force on Psychology's Contribution to End Homelessness*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Appio, L., Chambers, D., & Mao, S. (2013). Listening to the voices of the poor and disrupting the silence about class issues in psychotherapy. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 69*, 152-161. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.58.5.377
- Atwool, N. (2006). Attachment and resilience: Implications for children in care. *Child Care in Practice, 12*, 315-330. doi:10.1080/13575270600863226
- Barker, J. D. (2013). Negative cultural capital and homeless young people. *Journal of Youth Studies, 16*, 358-374. doi:10.1080/13676261.2012.718434
- Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? *American Psychologist, 59*, 20-28. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.59.1.20
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 2. Separation: Anxiety and anger*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1977). The making and breaking of affectional bonds; I. Aetiology and psychopathology in the light of attachment theory. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 130*, 201-210. doi:10.1192/bjp.130.3.201

- Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss: Vol. 3. Loss: Sadness and depression*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Briere, J. (2002). Treating adult survivors of severe childhood abuse and neglect: Further development of an integrative model. In J. E. B. Myers, L. Berliner, J. Briere, C. T. Hendrix, T. Reid, & C. Jenny (Eds.), *The APSAC handbook on child maltreatment* (2nd ed., pp. 175-202). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Boston, MA: The President and Fellows of Harvard College.
- Brown, N. R., Kallivayalil, D., Mendelsohn, M., & Harvey, M. R. (2012). Working the double edge: Unbraiding pathology and resiliency in the narratives of early-recovery trauma survivors. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 4, 102-111. doi:10.1037/a0024969
- Caldwell, J. G., & Shaver, P. R. (2012). Exploring the cognitive-emotional pathways between adult attachment and ego-resiliency. *Individual Differences Research*, 10, 141-152.
- Chamberlain, C., & Johnson, G. (2013). Pathways into adult homelessness. *Journal of Sociology*, 49, 60-77. doi:10.1177/1440783311422458
- Clandin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cleverly, K., & Kidd, S. A. (2011). Resilience and suicidality among homeless youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, 34, 1049-1054. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2010.11.003

- Cornes, M., Manthorpe, J., Joly, L. & O'Halloran, S. (2014). Reconciling recovery, personalisation and housing first: Integrating practice and outcome in the field of multiple exclusion homelessness. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 22, 134-143. doi:10.1111/hsc.12067
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Davis, L. E. (2014). Have we gone too far with resiliency? *Social Work Research*, 38, 5-6. doi:10.1093/swr/svu003
- DeForge, B. R., Belcher, J. R., O'Rourke, M., & Lindsey, M. A. (2008). Personal resources and homelessness in early life: Predictors of depression in consumers of homeless multiservice centers. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 13, 222-242. doi: 10.1080/15325020701769105
- Denzin, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Edidin, J. P., Ganim, Z., Hunter, S. J., & Karnik, N. S. (2011). The mental and physical health of homeless youth: A literature review. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 43, 354-375. doi:10.1007/s10578-011-0270-1
- Fiske, S. T. (2010). Envy up, scorn down: How comparison divides us. *American Psychologist*, 65, 698-706. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.65.8.698
- Fraley, R. C., & Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Attachment and loss: A test of three competing models on the association between attachment-related avoidance and adaptation to bereavement. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30, 878-890. doi:10.1177/0146167204264289

- Godfrey, E. B., & Wolf, S. (2015). Developing critical consciousness or justifying the system? A qualitative analysis of attributions for poverty and wealth among low-income racial/ethnic minority and immigrant women. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1037/cdp0000048
- Hauser, S. T., Golden, E., & Allen, J. P. (2006). Narrative in the study of resilience. *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 61, 205-227.
- Herman, J. L. (1997). *Trauma and recovery*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Herrman, H., Stewart, D. E., Diaz-Granados, N., Berger, E. L., Jackson, B., & Yuen, T. (2011). What is resilience? *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 56, 258-265.
- Johnson, S. M. (2007). A new era for couple therapy: Theory, research, and practice in concert. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 26, 5-16. doi:10.1521/jsyt.2007.26.4.5
- Karreman, A., & Vingerhoets, A. J. J. M. (2012). Attachment and well-being: The mediating role of emotional regulation and resilience. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 53, 821-826. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2012.06.014
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2005). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. L. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 403-455). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Klerman, G. L., Weissman, M. M., Rounsaville, B. J., & Chevron, E. (1984). *Interpersonal psychotherapy of depression*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Krumer-Nevo, M., & Benjamin, O. (2010). Critical poverty knowledge: Contesting othering and social distancing. *Current Sociology*, 58, 693-714. doi:10.1177/0011392110372729

- Larkin, H., & Park, J. (2012). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), services use, and services helpfulness among people experiencing homelessness. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 93, 85-93.
doi:10.1606/1044-3894.4192
- Lebrun-Harris, L. A., Baggett, T. P., Jenkins, D. M., Dripipatana, A., Sharma, R., Hayashi, ...Ngo-Metzger, Q. (2013). Health status and health care experiences among homeless patients in federally supported health centers: Findings from the 2009 patient survey. *Health Service Research*, 48, 992-1017.
doi:10.1111/1475-6773.12009
- Lee, B. A., Tyler, K. A., & Wright, J. D. (2010). The new homelessness revisited. *Annual Reviews of Sociology*, 36, 501-521. doi:10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115940
- Levenson, H. (1995). *Time-limited dynamic psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.
- Ludolph, P. S., & Bow, J. N. (2012). Complex alienation dynamics and very young children. *Journal of Child Custody*, 9, 153-178.
doi:10.1080/15379418.2012.715545
- Mancini, A. D., & Bonanno, G. A. (2009). Predictors and parameters of resilience to loss: Towards an individual differences model. *Journal of Personality*, 77, 1805-1831.
doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2009.00601.x
- Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, 56, 227-238. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.56.3.227

- Masten, A. S. (2007). Resilience in developing systems: Progress and promise as the fourth wave rises. *Development & Psychopathology*, 19, 921–930.
doi:10.1017/S0954579407000442
- Masten, A. S., & Coatsworth, (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons learned from research on successful children. *American Psychologist*, 53, 205-220. doi:10.1037//0003-066X.53.2.205
- Masten, A. S., & Reed, M. J. (2002). Resilience in development. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 74-88). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- McNulty, J. K., & Fincham, F. D. (2012). Beyond positive psychology: Toward a contextual view of psychological processes. *American Psychologist*, 67, 101-110.
doi:10.1037/a0024572
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mertens, D. M. (2010). An introduction to research. In *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (3rd ed., pp. 1-45). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mikulincer, M., Shaver, P. R., & Sapir-Lavid, Y., & Avihou-Kanza, N. (2009). What's inside the minds of securely and insecurely attached people? The secure-base script and its associations with attachment-style dimensions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 97, 615-633.
doi:10.1177/1948550610389822

- Morrell-Bellai, T., Goering, P. N., & Boydell, K. M. (2000). Becoming and remaining homeless: A qualitative investigation. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 21*, 581-604.
- Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 250-260.
doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250
- National Alliance to End Homelessness (2013). *Snapshot of homelessness*. Retrieved from http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/snapshot_of_homelessness
- National Coalition for the Homeless. (2009). *How many people experience homelessness?* Retrieved from http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/How_Many.html
- Nooe, R. M., & Patterson, D. A. (2010). The ecology of homelessness. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 20*, 105-152.
doi:10.1080/10911350903269757
- Nyamathi, A., Marfisee, M., Slagle, A., Greengold, B., Liu, Y., & Leake, B. (2012). Correlates of depressive symptoms among homeless young adults. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 34*, 97-117. doi:10.1177/0193945910388948
- Ortega-Alcázar, I., & Dyck, I. (2012). Migrant narratives of health and well-being: Challenging 'othering' process through photo-elicitation interviews. *Critical Social Policy, 32*, 106-125. doi:10.1177/0261018311425981
- Paradis, E. K. (2000). Feminist and community psychology ethics in research with homeless women. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 28*, 839-858.

- Patterson, M. L., Markey, M. A., & Somers, J. M. (2012). Multiple paths to just ends: Using narrative interviews and timelines to explore health equity and homelessness. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11, 132-151.
- Petrovich, J. C., & Cronley, C. C. (2015). Deep in the heart of Texas: A phenomenological exploration of unsheltered homelessness. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1037/ort0000043
- Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, J. G. (2006). Locating narrative inquiry historically: Thematics in the turn to narrative. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry* (pp. 3-35). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52, 137-145. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.137
- Poremski, D., Whitley, R., & Latimer, E. (2015). Building trust with people receiving supported employment and housing first services. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1037/prj0000137
- Rodell, D. E., Benda, B. B., & Rodell, L. (2003). Suicidal thoughts among homeless alcohol and other drug abusers. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 21, 57-74. doi:10.1300/J020v21n02_04
- Schonfeld, T. L., Brown, J. S., Weniger, M., & Gordon, B. (2003). Research involving the homeless: arguments against payment-in-kind (PinK). *IRB: Ethics and Human Research*, 25, 17-20. doi:10.2307/3564602

- Siegel, D. J. (2001). Toward an interpersonal neurobiology of the developing mind: Attachment relationships, “mindsight,” and neural integration. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 22, 67-94.
doi:10.1002/1097-0355(200101/04)22:1<67::AID-IMHJ3>3.0.CO;2-G
- Staab, S. D., & Reimers, F. A. (2013). Competent poverty training. *Journal of Clinical Psychology: In Session*, 69, 172-181. doi:10.1002/jclp.21956
- Stuart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, 42 USC 1130 (1987).
- Taylor-Seehafer, M., Jacobvitz, D., & Steiker, L. H. (2008). Patterns of attachment organization, social connectedness, and substance use in a sample of older homeless adolescents. *Family Community Health*, 31, 581-588.
doi:10.1097/01.FCH.0000304021.05632.a1
- Tedeschi, R. G., & Kilmer, R. P. (2005). Assessing strengths, resilience, and growth to guide clinical interventions. *Professional Psychotherapy: Research and Practice*, 36, 230-237. doi:10.1037/0735-7028.36.3.230
- Teyber, E., & McClure, F. (2011). *Interpersonal process in therapy: An integrative model*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Torchalla, I., Strehlau, V., Li, K., Schuetz, C., & Krausz, M. (2012). The association between childhood maltreatment subtypes and current suicide risk among homeless men and women. *Child Maltreatment*, 17, 132-143.
doi:10.1177/1077559512439350

- Tsai, J., Edens, E. L., & Rosenheck, R. A. (2011). A typology of childhood problems among chronically homeless adults and its association with housing and clinical outcomes. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 22*, 853-870. doi:10.1353/hpu.2011.0081
- Vasquez, M. J. T. (2012). Psychology and social justice: Why we do what we do. *American Psychologist, 67*, 337-346. doi:10.1037/a0029232