

Homelessness Experiences by Voicemail:

How cisgender-heterosexual and LGBTQ+ people narrate their homelessness in the absence of stakeholders.

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Rationale

In the UK, people who experience homelessness can tend to have to retell their story, time and time again, in ways that will grant them access to precious and elusive support.

In a typical interview dynamic, a power dynamic is established whereby the interviewer chooses the timing, tone, and wording of the questions.

An anonymous audio response empowers the participant to contribute using whatever words they choose.

Findings

Themes

- 1) Entering homelessness involves an often difficult to narrate spiral of events marked by trauma, tense family relationships, and a dented sense of agency
- 2) Experiencing homelessness involves varied attempts to make 'meaning' out of events via moral worth, fate, and betrayal
- 3) Navigating homelessness services requires grit and identifying the people that can help you

LGBTQ+ group differences

- 1) More varied, expressive, and less self-polished approach to presenting their narratives
- 2) More hesitant claims to the label 'homeless'
- 3) Societal and familial discrimination and exclusion due to identity
- 4) Less likely to use services

Research Questions

- 1) How do people who have homelessness experiences talk about them?
- 2) What do people want to share when the only prompt is to share what they feel is relevant?
- 3) What is homelessness to people who have experienced it - is there a clear definition, where does it start, and where does it end?
- 4) How do these experiences differ for LGBTQ+ people?

Methods

Theoretical framework: Life Course Theory (Elder, 1998); Pathways Approach (Clapham, 2003) framework

Analysis: Thematic Narrative Analysis (Tasker, & Delvoye, 2015); AOCERC story structures (Labov & Waletzky, 1997); Biographical Narratives (Gergen & Gergen, 1988)

Participants: 10 adults aged between 18-65

Procedure: Web-app which asked a minimal amount of demographic text-based questions before prompting the audio response to the question...

"Tell me the story of how you came to be homeless. Please include any background information and events from any point in your life that you feel are relevant and would like to share"

Key References

Clapham, D. (2003). Pathways approaches to homelessness research. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 13(2), 119-127.

Elder, G. H. (1998). The Life Course as Developmental Theory. *Child Development*, 69(1), 1-12.

Tasker, Fiona and Delvoye, M. (2015) Moving out of the shadows: accomplishing bisexual motherhood. *Sex Roles* 73 (3), pp. 125-140.

