

## Undergraduate Research Symposium May 18, 2018 Mary Gates Hall

### Online Proceedings

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#### POSTER SESSION 1

Commons West, Easel 10

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

##### **Wellbeing: A Photovoice Exploration of Health Among Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness**

*Liesl Henthorn, Senior, Nursing*

*UW Honors Program*

*Mentor: Anita Souza, Psychosocial and Community Health Nursing*

Nationwide older adults experiencing homelessness is on the rise. In Seattle, over 11,000 individuals are homeless and over 20% are over the age of 50. People experiencing homelessness face a variety of barriers in attaining and maintaining physical and mental health. These barriers are often insurmountable for older adults. The purpose of this investigation was to explore the facilitators and barriers to wellbeing in a sample of male adults over age 50 who are homeless and utilizing a night shelter in Seattle. We used an interpretive phenomenological approach with a photovoice methodology. Participants were asked to take photos that captured their response to the questions, "What supports your wellbeing and what are barriers to your wellbeing?" Additionally, we collected demographic variables such as age, gender, duration of homelessness, and age first homeless. Following the collection of photographs, we held two semi-structured focus groups approximately three weeks apart. At the first meeting, we discussed the meanings captured by their photos. The meeting was audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and themes were extracted utilizing Dedoose software. We anticipate that older adults have unique unmet needs. A lack of established services tailored to this population, coupled with recent cuts to services has impacted access to programs that foster good mental and physical health. These findings have important implications for nursing practice, gerontology, and public health. Information gained from this project can serve as a tool to inform policy change towards efficacious person-centered solutions for older adults experiencing homelessness.

#### POSTER SESSION 1

Commons West, Easel 9

11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

##### **Secondary Trauma in Homeless Service Providers: A Pilot Exploration**

*Julie Trang, Fifth Year, Nursing*

*UW Honors Program*

*Mentor: Anita Souza, Psychosocial and Community Health Nursing*

Homeless service providers often provide care and support to homeless individuals and families with experiences of trauma. Through hearing their client's trauma stories and witnessing the pain, fear, and suffering that their clients endure, homeless service providers may be at risk for developing secondary trauma. Secondary trauma occurs when a helping professional develops symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder through empathetic engagement with someone who has firsthand trauma experiences. A recent study revealed that 25% of homeless service providers reported high levels of vicarious traumatization. Amid a growing homelessness crisis and the challenges of ongoing budget cuts that homeless service agencies face, the percentage of homeless service providers with secondary trauma is likely to increase. The purpose of this investigation is to gain a better understanding about homeless service providers' exposure and experiences of secondary trauma in their work environment. Participants of this study are homeless service providers that were recruited through convenience sampling from a large homeless service organization in King County. Participants completed demographic questions, a highly validated scale measuring Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL), and open-ended focus questions that explored occupational health challenges as well as personal level protective health factors. All measures were collected using an online survey application. We anticipate to find associations between secondary trauma among homeless service providers and high cumulative exposure to working with survivors of trauma, low engagement with self-care practices, a perceived lack of social and organizational support, and high work-related stress. Information gained through this research may be used to identify ways to protect, sustain, and empower homeless service providers so that they can provide safe and quality care for their clients. The results of this investigation will be used to support occupational health policies and guidelines that promote the health and wellbeing of frontline workers in the homeless sector.