

What are the challenges in
identifying & addressing
homelessness issues?



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The perspectives and challenges may or may not be the same from both the provider and /or the consumer:

- Stigma, (it's their/our/my fault)
- Stereotyping about what homelessness is and looks like?
- Shame to ask for help or seek assistance
- Navigating difficult and complex systems
- Lack of interaction between Aged Care Services and the Specialist Homelessness System
- Aged care services not aware of risk factors and signs of homelessness
- Rising rent costs, lack of affordable housing options
- Casualisation of workforces, breakdown of families or domestic violence.



Activity 7

Reflecting on what it may mean for your work

Questions

1. Discuss a time when you have supported someone who was experiencing or was at risk of homelessness? What did you do, what did you find challenging, what did you learn?
2. What can be challenges for consumers in identifying or addressing homelessness?
3. What may be challenges for you as a community care worker in identifying or addressing homelessness with consumers?



Possible reflections

Below, you can find some examples of what may make it challenging, both from the perspective of the consumer as well from the perspective of direct care workers.

Possible challenges for consumers

- The consumer may not realise that they are at risk or in fact experiencing homelessness
- Consumers may not dare to bring up the issue, e.g. because they think this is not a service your organisation may provide
- Feeling that: “I just need housing (see Housing First)- everything else can wait” and therefore may not prioritise other support services at this point in their life
- There is a shortage of services for older people who are homeless: out of 1,518 homelessness services nationally only three are specialist services for older people
- Becoming frustrated by the complexity and rigidity of the Aged Care and Homeless Service Systems
- Low self-worth: expecting a poor experience and maybe thinking: “I may not be worthy of the QUALITY service we all deserve”
- Distrust of services, as a result of trauma, or past experiences of not being provided a service that met their needs in terms of safety and/or outcomes

What can make it challenging for direct care workers

- Lack of interaction between Specialist Homelessness System and Aged Care Services*
- Facing a Homeless Service System that is complex and mystifying
- Lack of confidence with how to identify and respond to people at risk of homelessness
- Not knowing how to sensitively raise the issue of housing insecurity
- Facing the challenge of empathy if confronted with anger and frustration ([click here for more on trauma-Informed Care](#))
- Experiencing feelings of helplessness and inadequacy if the Homeless Service System fails your client ⁵²
- Australian Housing and Urban Housing Institute (AHURI) found the lack of coordination and collaboration between Aged Care and Homelessness services to be one of the keys to securing better outcomes for their mutual clients. They recommend establishing a dialogue between the different providers ⁵³
- No matter how effective service provision is, without access to stable long-term housing for older people there will continue to be a revolving door as people who are homeless move between services. ⁵⁴



We value your feedback.
Please click the link below for a short
evaluation.

[Evaluation](#)

