

People's experience of homelessness support proves housing and intensive help is life changing

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Giving a unique insight into the lives of people trapped in the cycle of homelessness, a study including three years of interviews with people details how their lives have dramatically benefitted from three-years of housing and intensive support.

Coinciding with this year's Homelessness Week theme 'everybody needs a home', Sacred Heart Mission (SMH) has released a Qualitative Study of Experiences and Perspectives of J2SI Study Participants (J2SI) by Swinburne Associate Professor Monica Thielking proving its Journey to Social Inclusion program is a proven integrated approach to solve homelessness.

Associate Professor Thielking explains she interviewed a randomly selected group of J2SI and control group participants from the program's Phase Two, which ran from 2016-19, to gain an in-depth understanding about the systemic barriers people face when trying to exit homelessness.

"Participants' stories revealed real changes in personal wellbeing and social inclusion people needed to be accommodated in [housing](#) that fitted the definition of a 'home' - rather than just a roof and four walls," says Associate Professor Thielking.

"Unfortunately, we heard many stories about being placed in sub-standard and unsafe housing situations which acted as a barrier rather

than a facilitator of positive change."

Associate Professor Thielking says the majority of J2SI participants spoke positively about the impact the J2SI program had on their lives, with seven out of 10 reporting they had secured permanent housing and felt supported by case managers to prioritise their particular needs.

"When people achieved positive improvements in relation to their [mental health](#), substance use and employment, participants said having the safety and stability of a permanent house was the main reason they could rebuild their lives," says Associate Professor Thielking.

"The J2SI program improved the quality of participants' lives in several tangible ways by assisting them to meet their everyday survival needs.

"In many cases, this meant help for people to finally obtain safe, stable and appropriate housing as well as supporting them to manage complex health and [social needs](#) that had often gone unaddressed."

Throughout the interviews, Monica says the participants' responses revealed how they wanted choice about a safe, accessible place to call their own and for their homes to be adequately furnished and close to services as well as public transport.

"An integral component of the J2SI program is being available for people who experience chronic homelessness and putting the individual's needs at the centre of service provision," Monica says.

"The report highlights a need for homelessness service providers and the service system more generally to provide a streamlined, integrated, client-centred and quality service that anchors individuals in safe, secure and appropriate housing, which the J2SI program has been successfully doing over several years."

Associate Professor Thielking says the ground-breaking J2SI model could be replicated on a larger scale across Australia and end the homelessness problem.

"With further investment and refinement of the model, J2SI has the potential to support people throughout Australia to exit homelessness and to build meaningful lives in safe, stable accommodation," says Associate Professor Thielking.

More information: Chronic Homelessness in Melbourne: Third-Year Outcomes of Journey to Social Inclusion.

www.sacredheartmission.org/doc ... titative-report/file

Provided by Swinburne University of Technology

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