

# How do you transition from being homeless to having a home





With the support of the LMCF and Ivanhoe Grammar CHP convened a pre-conference workshop where the experiences and views of a broad range of people with a lived experience of homelessness were explored in a safe, supportive environment.



The workshop brought together members of :

- CHP's Peer Education Support Program (PESP)
- Melbourne City Mission's Frontyard Youth Action Committee (FYAC)
- Launch Housing's Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG)

The focus of the workshop was exploring:

- What does effective support post homelessness look like (ie once someone is housed)?
- The idea of post homelessness support delivered by people with a lived experience of homelessness



**What is it like when you first move into your new house after having been homeless?**

The focus here was on feelings and emotions.

## What is it like when you first move into your new house

- Scared
- Overwhelming
- Hemmed in
- Lonely
- Had to get used to having neighbours
- Hard transforming from youth refuges to adult refuges and then permanent housing
- Hard to get used to a normal life
- Exhausted
- Feels like coming down of drugs
- Anxiety

## What is it like when you first move into your new house

- Total exhaustion
- Shit – loneliness
- Basically on your own
- Insecurity
- Isolation
- Food stress
- Difficulty transitioning into a new community
- Things from the past get triggered
- Being frantic to feeling empty
- From surviving to feeling lonely
- Overwhelming – been homeless for so long, learn to be a ‘person’ again, have responsibilities, become independent gain

## What is it like when you first move into your new house

- Shame about not being able to do 'normal' things
- Trauma of having been homeless sets in once you have place , you start to realise what you actually experienced
- Lots of expectation from society to have everything sorted and together
- Learning to budget and cook – lots of take away and cheap frozen food
- Always being scared and unsure and feeling unsafe
- Feels like coming down from a drug – then reality hits
- On edge, unsure of surrounding, what to expect, am I going to be okay now?
- Not much control
- An expectation to be totally fine after such a big change



# How did you create a home?

- Make friends
- Get everything in its place - 'Mise en place'
- Creating routines
- Learning who you are with a home
- Reclaiming your space
- Owning the place
- Decorating
- Sourcing own furniture
- Inviting friends over
- Fill the house with what you love

# What are the practical things that are needed when you first moved into a new house after being homeless?

- Running hot water, gas, electricity, water
- TV, Fridge
- Linen, bedding
- Crockery
- Food hamper
- A clock
- Internet
- Furniture
- Support
- Toiletries
- Regular check in with some one to check if you are travelling ok

# What are the practical things that are needed when you first moved into a new house after being homeless?

An information pack with:

- Information on free community and health services
- Support services in the local area
- Recommendations for primary and high schools in the area
- Myki pass for a week
- A map of the area
- Places to buy food
- Close bulk billing doctors and health services
- Public transport timetables

# A peer support/community visitors model would be helpful because:

- Moral support
- Mental health support
- With a peer support worker there is less of a power imbalance
- More confidence in peers and willingness to share
- Someone just to touch base with and check in
- Someone to call when you need them – a back stop
- Human connections
- Someone to help with practical things like getting to appointments
- General health and wellbeing and guidance
- Welfare check in

# A peer support/community visitors model would be helpful because:

- Breaks down the shame, not scared to ask for what you need
- Someone who understands you, you don't have to explain yourself
- Assistance to gain back your confidence and have a voice again
- Facilitate a safe space
- Anticipate what you need because they have been there – you don't know what you don't know
- Someone to check in with who you relate to
- Stops isolation
- Gets you out of the house
- Assisting to reengage in the community

# The key elements of an effective peer support/community visitors model :

- Well funded
- Training
- People with lived experience
- One on one
- Support people not changing all the time
- Not time limited
- J2Si – more! But no time limit
- Paid – creates commitment
- WWC and Police checks but opportunity to overcome not having them given the experiences of many people experiencing homelessness – give them a fair go

# The key elements of an effective peer support/community visitors model :

- Access to education, training, seminars etc, professional development opportunities
- Training for the role peer support role
- Proper selection and vetting of peer support workers
- Training for peer workers is ongoing and not once off
- Compassion, empathy, people skills, sensitive, discreet, confidential
- Experience in recovery and stability but not still going through it
- Opportunities for advancement
- Equip the workers with Effective case management skills
- Always available - no time limit on peer workers
- Open ended



**THANK YOU.**

**Council to Homeless Persons**

**[www.chp.org.au](http://www.chp.org.au)**