# parity

## The August 2019 "The Last Mile of the Way: Homelessness, Death and Dying" edition of *Parity*

*This edition of Parity is sponsored by: Launch Housing, Sacred Heart Mission, Wintringham, Micah Projects and Hammondcare New South Wales.*

There a clear relationship between homelessness, death and dying. This relationship means that people experiencing homelessness often die prematurely and avoidably. Often relegated to the margins in our thinking about homelessness, it is time to bring the relationship between homelessness and death to the centre of our attention.

### Introduction

Death and dying is not an easy subject to discuss. While not exactly a taboo subject, there are constraints and conventions that frame and limit its examination and discussion. In modern societies there is perhaps a romantic view that death is normally the end-point or culmination of a long life well lived. One version of this romantic view is that "old" people die following periods of gradual decline and deterioration, and after receiving the appropriate levels of treatment, care and support. In best-case scenarios, they die at home surrounded by their loved ones, or in appropriate care, care that has prolonged their life as long and as comfortably as possible.

However, for many people experiencing homelessness, the above scenario if very distant from their reality.

There is a general acknowledgement that people experiencing homelessness have higher rates of mortality and morbidity than the wider population of housed people. Many people experiencing homelessness die of preventable illnesses and health conditions attributable at least in part to their experience of homelessness. Some people experiencing homelessness are killed. People forced to sleep rough are at far greater risk of the chronic ill health that can lead to a premature death. Other people experiencing homelessness die while in emergency or transitional accommodation from a range of causes, some of which may be attributable to their homelessness. Many people who die while homelessness die alone, uncared for and unsupported.

Contributors are invited to consider the following issues and questions in developing their articles:

- what do we know about the nexus between homelessness and death and dying and in particular, what do we know about the causes of death for people experiencing homelessness?
- what is the effectiveness (or otherwise) of existing policies and service responses in preventing avoidable deaths?
- what can be done to improve policy and service responses to prevent the avoidable deaths of people experiencing homelessness?
- what is being done to ensure that people who are or who have experienced homeless, are given the care and support they require and deserve to die without suffering and with dignity?

## Organisation

This edition of *Parity* will be made up of two sections.

The first section will consist of a summary report of the research findings of a scoping study being undertaken by CHP to examine and discuss what we know about the nexus between homelessness, death and dying, that is, between homelessness and the premature/early and avoidable deaths experienced by many people who are homeless.

The second section will consist of articles from contributors as per normal editions of *Parity*. Contributions will be sought from all those with an interest in understanding the relationship between homelessness and premature death and in particular, the service response these deaths and the work being done to preventing these deaths.

## A Framework for Discussion

### Part 1: *What do we know?*

This section would give contributors the opportunity to discuss the issues and questions around the quality and availability of the information that we have on the relationship between the experience of homelessness and premature death. What are the sources of this information and data? How available is this information? What comprehensive is this information and data?

For example, what information is available on the numbers/rates of different groups/cohorts of the wider homeless population who die prematurely? What is the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness (or rough sleeping) who die and likewise, the number of people in crisis accommodation or the number of women and children who become homeless as the result of domestic violence?

This section would also examine questions and issues of causality. Is it possible to identify the cause or causes of death? What is the role of comorbidity or tri-morbidity? Are their different causal factors for different groups/cohorts of people experiencing homelessness?

### Part 2. How effective is the existing policy and service response to the premature deaths of people experiencing homelessness?

This section would examine the policies and service responses in place that aim to prevent premature and avoidable deaths of people who are homeless? How in particular do specialist homelessness services respond to the deaths of their clients? How does the larger and wider mainstream service system, for example, the heath, mental health, drug and alcohol and policing systems respond to the deaths of people who have been homeless?

While it could be argued that all homelessness polices and services seek to prevent deaths, some service interventions, for example, Housing First and Street to Home programs are specifically designed to assist and support those most at risk of avoidable and preventable premature deaths. How do these programs work to prevent avoidable deaths? How successful are these specialist programs?

## Part 3: What is to be done?

This section is devoted to identifying what needs to be done, and what can be done, both in terms of wider social policies and in terms of homelessness policy and services, to improve the response to those at risk of preventable and avoidable deaths while experiencing homelessness.

## Part 4: Dying with dignity

This section is designed to give those services, particularly those services providing housing and support to the elderly homeless, the opportunity to discuss what they do to ensure their clients die with all the appropriate support and assistance required so that they do not die alone, or in pain, and with the dignity that they deserve.

## Contributing to the August 2019 "The Last Mile of the Way: Homelessness, Death and Dying" edition of *Parity*

Deadline: All contributions need to be submitted by Friday August 9th 2019.
**Submissions format**: All contributions should be submitted as Word attachments to parity@chp.org.au

**Word length**: Contributions can be up to 1,600 words (including references). This equates to a double page spread in *Parity*. Single page articles can be up to 800 words in length (including references). Longer contributions should be discussed with the *Parity* Editor.

**Embedded media:** Contributors are able to make suggestions for the placement of relevant hyperlinks, video and other multimedia within their content which can be embedded in the *Parity* online edition. Any suggestions will be reviewed by and decided upon by the *Parity* editor.

**Artwork**
Contributors are invited to submit the artwork they would like to accompany their article. Inclusion is dependent on the space being available. If artwork is not provided and is required, it will then be selected by the *Parity* Editor.

**Referencing**
All works that are cited or referred to in an article should be referenced. *Parity* does not encourage contributors to list a bibliography of references used in the development of an article but are *not* cited in the article. There is simply insufficient space for the inclusion of extensive bibliographies. The *Parity* referencing protocol is as follows:

**In-text citations**
CHP uses numbered-citation for all in-text citations.

Number references consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text. The first reference you cite will be numbered 1 in the text, and the second reference you cite will be numbered 2, and so on. A number is assigned to each reference as it is used. Even if the author is named in your text, a number must still be used.

References are listed in numerical order at the end of the document.
If the same reference is used more than once, it is given a new number each time it is used. Use op. cit.

The number can be placed outside the text punctuation to avoid disruption to the flow of the text, or be placed inside the text punctuation.

If a single sentence uses two or more citations, simply identify the references one after the other. Use a space, not a comma to separate the references.

For example:
International research has found that resilience in a homeless youth sample correlates with lower levels of psychological distress, suicide ideation, violent behaviour and substance abuse. 4, 5

Guidelines for Referencing in *Parity*
All references used in *Parity* articles should be listed using the following guidelines:

**Books:**
**Author's** surname, initial(s), year of publication, Title of book, Publisher, Place of Publication, Page **number(s).**

For example:
1. Seung S 2012, Connectome: How the Brain's Wiring Makes Us Who We Are, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, P.90.

**Journal Articles**
**Author's** surname, initial(s), year of publication, 'Title of article'**,** *Title of Journal,* volume number, issue number, Page number(s).
For example:
Trevithick P 2003 'Effective Relationship Based Practice', *Journal of Social Work Practice*, vol.17, no.2, pp.163-176.

**Newspaper articles:**
**With identified author:**
Authors Surname Initial Year of publication, 'Title of article', *Name of publication*, Date and year of publication, Page number(s) or <URL> if applicable.

For example:
Kissane K 2008, 'Brumby calls for tough sentences', *The Age*, 29 October 2017, p. 8.

**With no author:**
Use 'Unknown'
For example:
Unknown 2008, 'Brumby calls for tough sentences', *The Age*, 29 October 2017, p. 8.

**Webpage/document within a website or blog Post:**
Author's surname (if known) Initial, 'Page/Blog/Document Title', *The person or organisation responsible for the website,* Year of Publication (if known) <URL>

For example:
Greenblatt S, 'A special letter from Stephen Greenblatt', Australian Council of Social Services, 2017 <http://acoss.org/media/greenblatt>

**Audio podcast:**
Speaker/Hosts surname Initial, 'Title of episode', *Title of Podcast*, Year and date of Publication, <URL> (if available).

For example:
Todd B 2018, 'What homelessness looks like for women', Stuff Mom Never Told You, 14 March 2018 <https://www.stuffmomnevertoldyou.com/podcasts/what-homelessness-looks-like-for-women.html >

**Online video/film or documentary:**
*Title* Date of recording, Format, Publisher,
For example:
*Indigenous homelessness* 1992, video recording, Green Cape Wildlife Films.

**Personal communication:**
Personal communication may include (but are not limited to) email, fax, interview, conversations, lectures, speeches, telephone conversations and letters. Usually personal communications do not appear, as the information is not retrievable. However, due to the numbered citations used in *Parity*, we ask that they be included as follows:

**Author's** surname First name, **Method of communication, Date and year of Communication**
For example:
Johnson George, Telephone interview, 12 August 2018.

**Citing the same reference more than once:**
When a reference is cited a number of times, use op cit. after the year has been given. If the page number is different from the first use, cite the new page number as well.
For example:
Asante K O and Meyer-Weitz A 2015 op cit. pp. 230-231.

**Citing the same reference consecutively**
Use Ibid. when the same reference appears consecutively. If the page number is different from the first use, cite the page number as well.
For example:
1. Florn B H 2015, 'The cost of youth homelessness', Journal of Adolescence, vol.17, no.2, pp.163-176.
2. Ibid. pp.32-33.

**Multiple Authors**
For every reference type, give all the authors Surnames and first Initials followed by a comma in the bibliography. The last author listed should be preceded by 'and'.
For example:
Sharp J, Peters J and Howard K 2002, The management of a student research project, Gower, Aldershot, England.

**Content**
By providing your contribution, you confirm and agree that (except where you have referenced or cited any other's work) the contribution is your original work and has not been copied from any other source.

**Use of content**
If your contribution is accepted, it will be published by or on CHP's behalf in an edition of the *Parity* magazine. *Parity* is available in hard copy and online.

**Online copies of back editions of *Parity* can be found on:**
http://search.informit.com.au/browseJournalTitle;res=IELHSS;issn=1032-6170

**Assistance and Questions**
Feedback, input and assistance can be provided with drafts if required. The *Parity* editor is available at all stages of the preparation of your contribution to look at drafts and provide input and feedback. The earlier drafts are received for feedback, the better.

If prospective contributors have any questions they should contact the *Parity* Editor, Noel Murray, party@chp.org.au Ph: 03 8415 6201, 0466 619 582