QUICK, IMPORTANT INFORMATION

• The homeless are not a homogeneous population so there is no utility in thinking/addressing them as such
• Category 1: Literally homeless, lacks regular/fixed/adequate nighttime residence
• Category 2: Imminent risk: will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence
• Category 3: Other Federal Statutes, unaccompanied youth under 25, families with children and youth
• Category 4: Fleeing/attempting to flee DV
  • http://www.partnersendinghomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/
PATTERNS OF HOMELESSNESS

• **Episodic**: An individual is considered to experiencing episodic homelessness when they are having recurrent problems with housing. Often these individuals have seasonal/minimum wage income or sporadic domestic situations that affect stable housing.

• **Situational**: An individual is considered to be experiencing situational homelessness when they are facing some sort of housing, health care, financial, or job loss crisis. When homeless services are provided, these individuals usually are able to locate and obtain another stable housing situation.

• **Chronic**: An individual is considered to be experiencing chronic homelessness when they have a disabling condition and have been continuously homeless for a year or more or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years.
A STUDY ON HOLD

• Developing an Indigenous Information System for the Homeless
• Problem: The homeless have little time, energy or money to track down information. Yet they are sent on unsuccessful quests where the information is not available, they do not have the proper documentation, etc.
• Solution: applying experiential information knowledge of the homeless
• Development of website with info represented in various forms
• Difficulties: locals don’t use the internet, keeping information updated/accurate, trust
A MORE PROMISING STUDY

- The Role of Social Media and Information Technology in Building and Maintaining Information Networks of the Homeless
- Problem: This current study revisits earlier works which found the social networks (and thus the information networks) of homeless parents in Greensboro, NC and Seattle were extremely sparse and disconnected. Although the participants were not information poor they lacked the social support that comes from strong ties and connected networks that are often developed through information sharing. The smaller the network, the longer the family was homeless.
• Recent experiences volunteering at the Interactive Resource Center the phenomenon of cell phone use has raised the question as to whether the use of information technology and social media have transformed social networks of the homeless in the U.S.

• Research questions for the proposed study are:
  • What do the social networks/information networks of homeless people look like?
  • Has the use of cell phones/information technology and social media changed the social networks/information networks of the homeless?
  • Are the homeless leveraging social/information networks as forms of social capital and social support?
DATA COLLECTION

- Observations
- Interviews
- Name Generator Document
- Egocentric Network Mapping using cell phone contacts
DATA FROM PAST STUDY
OTHER STUDIES/EFFORTS

• Mary Yost (2102) The Invisible Become Visible: An Analysis of How People Experiencing Homelessness Use Social Media
  • http://tinyurl.com/n9qxnbu
• Taylor Soper (2014) Hack to End Homelessness:
  • http://tinyurl.com/ondmkmm
• Chris Lisee (2012) Homeless Find Support On Social Media Networks, Facebook, Twitter
  • http://tinyurl.com/92os5ar
BARRIERS/ISSUES/CONCERNS

• Free phones are not smart phones
• One qualifies if they receive food stamps
• Limited to 500 free minutes a month
• Cost of smart phones
• Access to computers
• Mental health issues
• Trust issues
• Sense of ‘community’
• Fragmentation, cliques, isolation, fluidity of connections
Q & A

• Thank you for inviting me!
• Contact information:
  • jahersbe@uncg.edu