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Organization: The Dwelling Place of Vermilion County

Introduction:

For our legacy project, we chose the wonderful Dwelling Place. The Dwelling Place is an organization that provides numerous resources and care to individuals experiencing homelessness or struggling with various challenges (The Dwelling Place, n.d.). This organization is a well-run facility that provides food, clothing, shelter for a short period, showers, laundry services, and companionship. The Dwelling Place also offers transitional housing, which helps individuals and their families become stable and transition to a more permanent residence. There are counselors on-site who can assist guests with everything from obtaining an ID to providing support during a crisis. The Dwelling Place is located in Danville, Illinois, at 100 N. Franklin Street. It is in the basement area of First Presbyterian Church.

We volunteered on two different Mondays, which is a day they organize the day center. On Mondays and Fridays, they operate the day centers, and on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, they provide sack lunches for the guests (The Dwelling Place, n.d.). We were there from 12:15 to 2:30 on one day and 12:15 to 6:30 on the other Monday. On these two days, we organized the donated clothes, prepared lunches for the guests, and prepared sack lunches for the volunteers to distribute on Tuesday. We also organized the office shelves, which included preserved food and snacks, medication, hygiene products, and everyday essentials. We were able to communicate and converse with the guests, and they were happy and intrigued to see new faces. The volunteers and employees were very elated and overjoyed that we were there and had chosen their organization to volunteer and offer a helping hand. We chose The Dwelling Place

because of the wonderful help they offer to the people experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness. We were initially unaware of all that this organization does for its guests, but once we arrived and learned more, we were certain we had made the right choice in where to volunteer. There is a real need for places like The Dwelling Place, especially in Danville, which is such a poverty-stricken city. Their mission and drive to help their guests is inspiring and worth supporting. Volunteering at The Dwelling Place made us feel like we were a part of something important and making a real change. The Dwelling Place relates to nursing by focusing on addressing the social and physical needs of the vulnerable population in the community. As a nurse, you can coordinate with the organization to help improve health outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Kaylee Andersen:

1. “ Progress to life transformation: Measuring self-sufficiency in addiction recovery among populations experiencing homelessness”

https://journals.lww.com/jan/fulltext/2024/10000/progress_to_life_transformation_measuring.6.aspx

When working in healthcare and caring for patients who experience homelessness, the staff need to be someone that they can support and rely on. Almost all the time, someone who is homeless has some kind of mental health issue, whether it be drugs, alcohol, or something that they are diagnosed with. In the article that Lashley (2024) published, she studied and adapted the “Progress of Transformation Model” for practical application. This model is based on self-sufficiency and stability across the various life domains (Lashley, 2024, p. 196). This study

dives deeper into the aspects of education, housing, life skills, relationships, sobriety, and mental health in the journey of self-sufficiency and personal recovery. From this study, Lashley got positive feedback and results because this program focuses on the individual who is going through the stages of recovery and learning how to be self-sufficient once they overcome their addiction.

This aligns with what we learned during our volunteering experience, which is that The Dwelling Place offers transitional housing for individuals who will benefit (The Dwelling Place, n.d.). During this housing trial, the guests are required to strive for self-sufficiency and independence. This article described a faith-based recovery program, similar to The Dwelling Place, which provides compassion to its guests.

2. “We rely on relationships: Homeless service providers experiences in coordinating care transition during COVID-19.”

https://journals.lww.com/professionalcasemanagementjournal/fulltext/2025/03000/we_rely_on_relationships_homeless_service.6.aspx

As everyone knows, the COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone in some way. It has had a negative impact on the homeless population, as more individuals are homeless, and there is a lack of trust between those individuals and the health care systems (Anderson & Bowen, 2025). This study was based on New York because it has one of the highest homeless populations. Within the study, the authors started with a baseline of the poverty levels, chronic comorbidities, and the lack of cross-sector collaboration (p. 58). A part of the study examined how individuals rely heavily on the relationship between the healthcare team and how to help them transition from their hospital stay to shelters or address their day-to-day post-discharge needs (Anderson & Bowen, 2025, p. 59). This relates to the volunteer work we did by providing a bridge between

systems for other resources to support people experiencing homelessness. Another part of this study focused on trust within the internal leadership, and it was shocking that most individuals were not aware of the resources available to them, especially in relation to protecting against the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, however, this study is identified in three major themes that were brought to light, highlighting both promoting and inhibiting factors in care coordination. Those are the following: “reliance on informal relationships, the impact of strong hierarchical structures, and the potential for transitional breakdown due to a lack of collaborative cross-sector information exchange” (Anderson & Bowen, 2025, p. 61). Now that we have identified the barriers, social work and healthcare can begin rebuilding the trust that was eroded during the COVID-19 pandemic. This article emphasizes the significance of relationships and networks in facilitating the transition of the homeless, which can enhance communication and trust.

Lydia Gondzur:

1. “Exploring what works well and less well in a community-based drop-in hub providing health and wellbeing services for people experiencing homelessness: A participatory action evaluation of service coordination.”

<https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-024-11897-x>

This article examines the challenges homeless individuals often face when seeking social and healthcare assistance (Adams & Ramsay, 2024). It also discusses how to overcome these challenges and get the help they need a little further. Between June and September 2023, a qualitative service evaluation was conducted using a participatory action research approach. A total of fourteen providers were interviewed. After these interviews were conducted and the evaluation was over, it was found that location, space, relationships, flexibility, and consistency were all major factors. This study demonstrated the importance of co-locating health, social, and

well-being services under one roof in improving trust, coordination, and access for the homeless population. This study demonstrated that the use of a drop-in approach provided both consistency and flexibility. This relates to our choice of site because the Dwelling Place has changed locations and has more room at its current building compared to its old one. The Dwelling Place is also very flexible and tries to connect with all of the people who drop in. Although there is room for improvement, this review provided insight into an example of how a variety of services provided by different organizations might function effectively.

2. “Ending youth homelessness is about relationships: The importance of drop-in centers and staff to youth experiencing homelessness.”

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740923003201?via%3Dihub>

This article highlights the benefits of drop-in centers for homeless children. This relates to our chosen site because the Dwelling Place is a daytime facility that allows the homeless to drop by for a meal and other everyday resources they may need. They surveyed 784 homeless youth and found that one-third of that number came to the drop-in center (Rice et al., 2023).

Participation in services that foster long-term stability and self-sufficiency is associated with positive relationships with staff. The staff at our volunteer location had a great relationship with all the people they were helping. It was also found in this study that the younger homeless people were less aware of their options for shelter and help. This can demonstrate how the center can contribute to creating a better environment and promoting happiness for those in need. Overall, it would be highly beneficial for the homeless to utilize drop-in centers, which could help them access the resources provided. The drop-in centers are a great example of a place where they can go and help them find housing options or emergency shelters.

Isabella Leevey:

1. “Shelter/housing options, supports and interventions for older people experiencing homelessness.” <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ageing-and-society/article/shelterhousing-options-supports-and-interventions-for-older-people-experiencing-homelessness/3BFE8C02EB5803C266ABFDCB8606528C>

There are a lot of older people who are homeless in the population of Danville. This article goes into depth about the older population and how homelessness is affecting this population the most (Canham et al., 2021). This study has demonstrated the positive impact of providing housing options for the homeless population on their overall health. This article examines the shelters, housing options, and interventions that exist for the older population. It is shown that when an older person is homeless, they are at more risk for developing worsening chronic health conditions, impairments, and mental health issues. It was found during this study that many programs designed for the homeless population are not designed with the older adult population in mind. This is a topic we discussed while volunteering at The Dwelling Place. We observed that the staff also informed us that the building this organization is located in does not have an elevator, only stairs. This location can be difficult for some handicap individuals with disabilities or older adults to access due to the lack of accessibility. This adversity is something this organization wants to change. This article was peer reviewed, and this data was supported by other journal articles as well (Canham et al., 2021).

2. “The determinants of length of homeless shelter stays: Evidence-based regression analyses.” <https://www.ssph-journal.org/journals/international-journal-of-public-health/articles/10.3389/ijph.2021.1604273/full>

This article, which was selected, provides an in-depth analysis of morbidity rates in the homeless population (Hao et al., 2022). This study was conducted in Massachusetts and analyzed approximately 44,000 stays in a homeless shelter over the years 2014-2018. The overall results of this study were that the homeless shelter stays were related to three different disabilities, which are physical, mental, and substance use disorders. It showed the normal shelter stay is around 77 days, with many individuals having multiple stays. Females tend to stay longer than males, minorities stay longer, and someone with a disability tends to stay longer. This relates to The Dwelling Place by the population served. It seemed that during our time volunteering, there were more females, more people with mental disorders, and people who had been coming to the organizations for a long period of time. In conclusion to this study, they saw that gender, age, race, disability, and ethnicity have contributed to people being homeless and having longer stays at the shelter (Hao et al., 2022). This article is peer-reviewed and incorporates findings from other studies as well.

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