



Adverse Childhood Experience and Homelessness

Sarah Johnsen and Nikoletta Theodorou

Presentation Outline

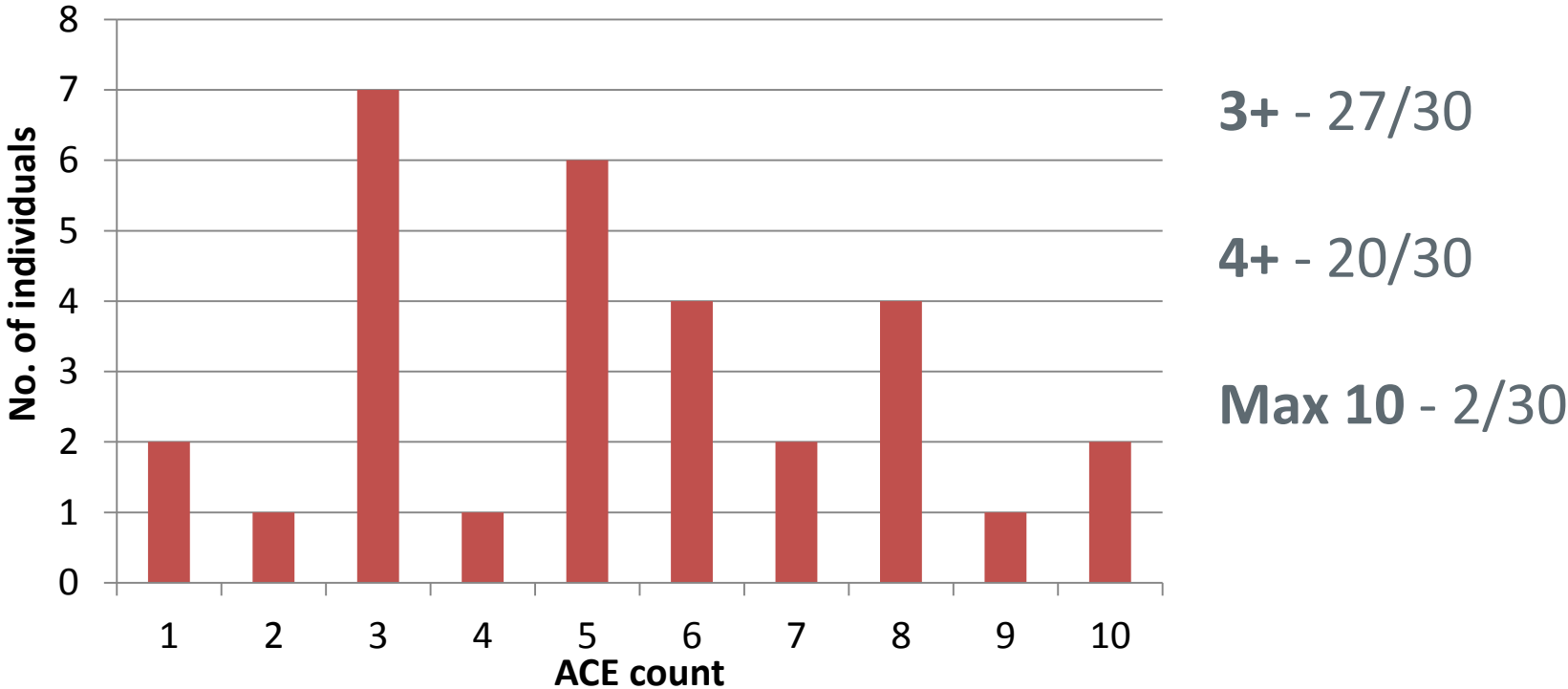
1. How prevalent is ACE amongst the (adult) homeless population?
2. What are the implications for affected individuals':
 - risk of homelessness?
 - engagement with support?
3. What are the implications for service providers?

Prevalence and Nature of Adversity

Experience	Per cent
Truanted from school a lot	50
Suspended, excluded or expelled from school at least once	36
Ran away from home and stayed away for at least one night	34
Violence between parent(s)/carer(s)	27
Parent(s)/carer(s) had a drug or alcohol problem	24
Sexually abused	23
Physically abused at home	22
Family was homeless	16
Spent time in local authority care	16
There was sometimes not enough to eat at home	15
Parent(s)/carer(s) had a mental health problem	15

Source: MEH survey. Base 452

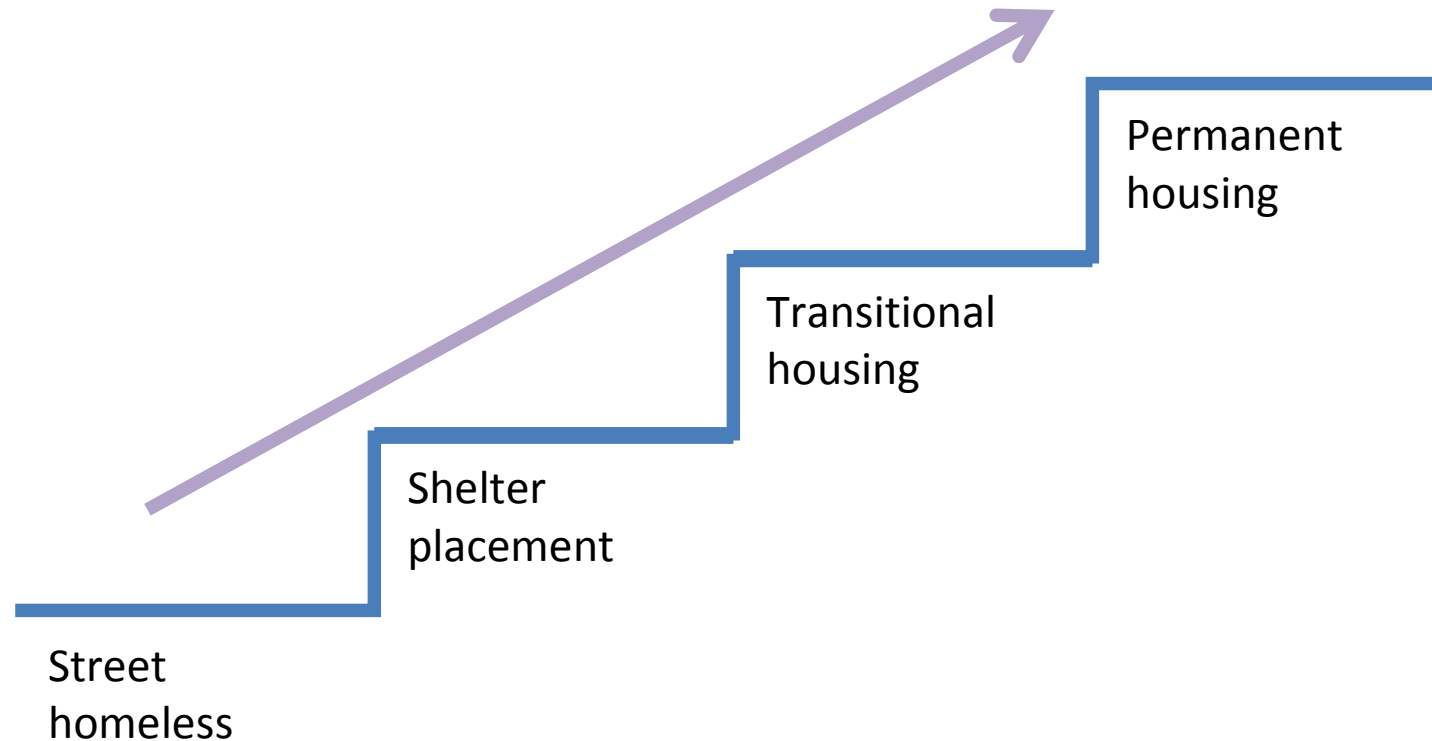
ACE count amongst MEH popn.



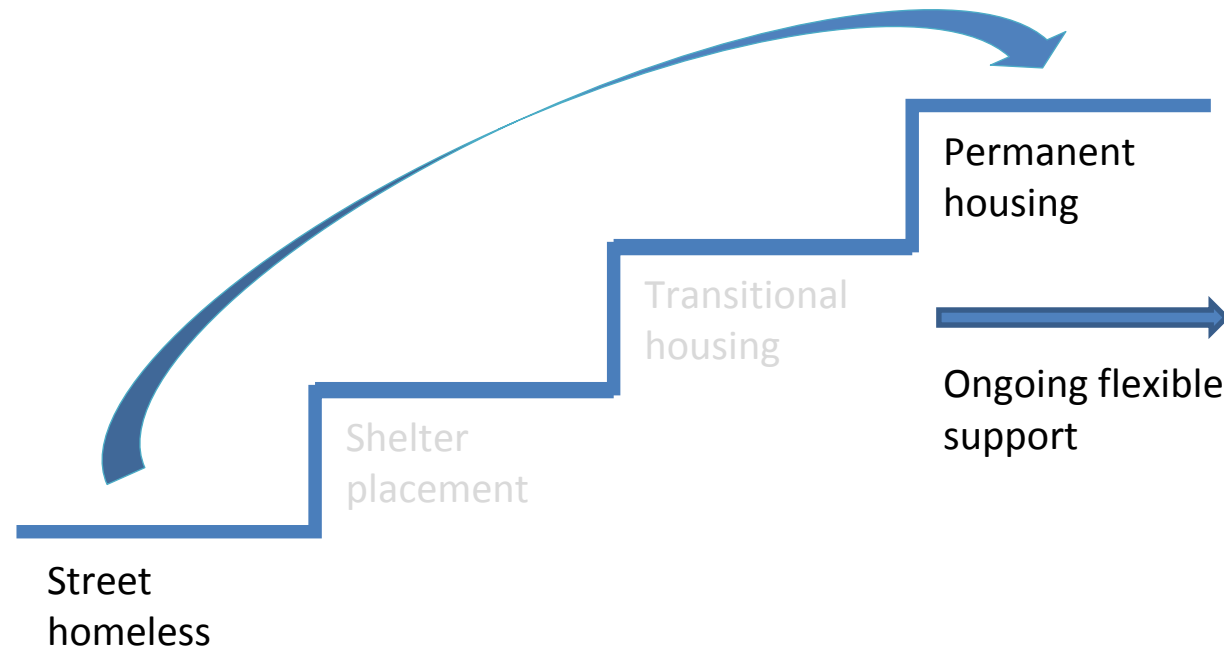
ACE and Relationships with Care

- ACEs influence ability to regulate emotions, cope with challenge and sustain relationships
- Trauma often underpins ambivalence toward or dismissal of care
- ‘Non’ or ‘destructive’ forms of engagement often lead to exclusion (and repeat cycle of rejection)
- Need for psychologically-informed recognition of these complexities and dynamics

Mainstream Approach: 'Treatment First'



Alternative Approach: 'Housing First'



Critical Ingredients of 'Housing First'

1. Longevity
2. Flexibility
3. Stickability
4. Normality

Longevity

‘Ontological security’ offered by **long-term security of tenure** and **non time limited** support

“They’re there when I need them ... They don’t get you somewhere and then just leave you”

(HF user, Glasgow)

Flexibility

Support provision is truly flexible as regards: type, intensity, location, etc.

“When I’ve had a lapse and I am feeling quite low they can step up their visits, it depends if I want to see them more ... Basically, it’s up to me”

(HF user, Glasgow)

Stickability

Fosters trust and enables honesty

“They’ve stood by me. Even though I’ve not turned up for appointments, they’ve still stuck behind me”

(HF user, Glasgow)

“Through any other agency to get somewhere you had to lie ... So, being able to just go ‘Oh...’ and tell the truth and say that you’ve been using and that you’ve had it ... that helped a lot”

(HF user, Glasgow)

Normality

Normal housing + support in normal ('non-homeless') settings



Mitigates stigma and facilitates integration

“When you’re stuck in the homeless scene in hostels and all that it’s just a vicious circle ... Once you’re taken out of that it’s up to you, but you’ve got all the support you need and ... your own little hideaway”

(HF user, Glasgow)

Concluding Thoughts

- Need for more effective prevention: widespread call for intensification (and tailoring?) of early intervention efforts
- Challenge for providers to:
 - recognise the impact of adversity on individuals' (often ambivalent and/or dismissive) relationships with care; and
 - avoid excluding or neglecting them for behaving in ways that are entirely understandable and (to an extent) predictable