

Blue Ribbon Task Force

Focus Groups

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Focus Group #3: Zoe House

Question 1: How do you define homelessness?

- #1 Having nowhere to call home
- #7 Without residence
- #3 Not having a place to call own home
- #2 Belonging nowhere
- #6 Not having a physical residence  
Not having connecting resources
- #4 Not having a physical residence  
No roof over head  
Displaced without resources
- #5 No place to call home

Question 2: How did you become homeless?

- #1 Drug use – relocated after treatment
- #3 Since retired from federal job (12 years ago?) – drug use – was never on the street – was always under someone’s roof – was by choice
- #2 Poor living skills – addiction?
- #6 Poor living skills  
Drug addiction – chose not to reside in an unsafe place
- #4 Drug abuse – clean for 60 days – living with a couple who started using so chose to leave but had nowhere to go  
Is on disability but lacked resources
- #7 Disability – waiting 3 years and has been denied 3 times  
Drug issues  
No income  
Selling drugs, but was own best customer

Question 3: How long have you been homeless or were you homeless?

- #1 December 2007
- #6 July 2007
- #4 Couple of weeks
- #2 About 2 years
- #3 12 years
- #5 3 days??

Question 5: How has homelessness affected the way you think about yourself?

- #2 Devastating blow to self esteem  
Humbling experience
- #6 Dragging 2yo with me  
Degrading  
Perpetuating sense of throwing hands up  
Motivating – look up – appreciative of bed
- #7 Depressing  
Embarrassing
- #1 Motivating but embarrassing at same time  
If you have income, really shouldn't be homeless
- #2 Motivating  
High cost of low living  
Process I would never repeat
- #4 Depressing  
Degrading
- #3 Depressed  
Embarrassed  
Blow to self esteem  
Leads to encouragement, motivation, determination
- #5 Takes discipline and humbleness to accept  
Came here to work out on own  
20yo with 3 kids – survival

Question 6: Thinking back to when you first became homeless, what would it have taken to prevent it?

- #3 Drug addiction, losing control  
Needed to make better decisions – seek help sooner for SA
- #6 Poor decision making  
Drugs  
Needed to chose to do things more healthy
- #2 Not be a selfish jack ass  
Think more about kids than drugs  
Resume meetings  
Take time to seek help for stress – work my network
- #5 Attitude – how I present self
- #6 Increased sense of self  
Self discipline
- #4 More education  
Life Skills  
Resources for jobs  
Money – needed to save money if got sick – have to be out of a job for 6 months before can collect disability

Question 7: What do you need to maintain a home/housing?

- #5 How to budget money  
Goals – maintain focus
- #4 When find a home – be sure it's safe  
Disability – cost wise and affordable, not just low income housing  
Things to be more feasible and accessible  
Know wants vs. needs
- #3 Be responsible  
Job  
Money  
Desire to have home
- #6 Desire to maintain house  
Coping skills  
Awareness of resources/connect  
If have no job – cannot get daycare – no daycare – can't leave kids to go out and get job  
Education on credit

#2 Chance/opportunity  
Respect/value for home  
Be able to afford it  
Network – SA and spiritual

#7 Budgeting skills  
Life skills

Question 8: What would you do if you had unlimited resources and could end homelessness?

#6 Child care – push start – help with necessities

#3 More jobs for minorities and felons

#7 TV ads, flyers, word of mouth to advertise free classes (life skills, coping skills, budgeting, GED, how to get a job. Rapport with section 8 housing

#2 Exposure – awareness of programs  
Education  
Show that anything is possible

#6 Education for minorities, felons, illiterate  
Awareness of resources

#3 Programs for people with a strong desire to change  
motivation to do well  
Help for those with felony on record

#2 “network for dummies” – where there are no stupid questions – realistic resources

Question 9: What effect has homelessness had on your children?

#5 Changes their behavior/emotions, how they talk to you. They want more attention. Don't know how to express themselves. Seem jealous of each other more. See mom depressed and frustrated – affects them – they act off of mom's emotions

#6 Child has abandonment issues- frustration – stressful  
But, she has been exposed to different areas

#3 Son is 28 – feels bad for mom – helps her – is more emotionally affected – he was never homeless

#4 4 kids – lost respect for her

Question 10: Did you ever double up? Do you know others who did?

- #2 Yes
- #6 Yes
- #1 Name was not on lease so considered homeless
- #5 Shelters, group homes, grandmother

Question 11: What three things should Pitt County do to end homelessness?

- #6 For single moms – all corners of self sufficiency – child care, transportation, job
- #2 Child care  
Classes – have to put work in, in order to benefit
- #3 Ongoing life changing programs  
Fellowship  
People can change life
- #4 Childcare where you work  
Resources more readily available
- #5 Help young mothers  
It's harder to get jobs b/c people judge  
Better parenting skills  
Proper day care  
Knowledge of resources  
CPS to unify, not crucify families  
Network of programs