



# Stewart

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #precariously-housed #addictions #contemplating-change

**“These hands are working hands and now they’re sitting idle. I’m sitting idle with a full tank of gas, and nowhere to go.”**

Stewart is a country boy stuck in the big city. He feels “squished,” living above Whyte Ave where he can’t open the window in summer for the noise. He came to Edmonton two years ago looking for work, but his body didn’t cooperate. Now he’s stuck. After a stint in the shelter, he found a place, but his situation isn’t stable.

He’s worked all kinds of jobs, from pipefitter to water-truck driver, all of them physical. With a hereditary hip condition and a history of neck and back injuries, he needs a different kind of opportunity. Not working has left

him disoriented. He talks about ‘the void,’ a feeling he can’t pinpoint. Years ago, he used cocaine to manage pain before a surgery. Now he’s got pint to cope with the pain of ‘the void’.

Despite having his own place, he barely sleeps, mind racing at all hours, thinking about how to get on track. He wants to get back to woodworking, which is also a metaphor that inspires him: “With wood, if you screw up, you’ve got to work from where you’ve messed up, there’s no going back, that’s what I love about it.”



people card

# Stewart

Male  
48  
German/ Finlander

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Fitting In** "I fit in but I don't feel like I fit it. It's always been that way, you're in but you're out."

**Respect** "I want to be treated like I treat everybody else."

**Comfort** "My comfort zone is limited. I haven't had adventures

### Stressors

**Mental Health** "Right now I'm stable. Not great, but stable. If I touch it, something's going to go sideways."

**Addiction** "I don't crave it every day, but when it's out there, I gotta have it, right?"

**Money** "I don't have enough to do anything with, but enough to get in trouble and not enough to bail me out again."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

builder

labourer

patient

#### Current roles

volunteer

uncle

addict

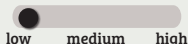
professional

#### Movement & Terrain

**Doesn't get out much due to physical abilities**

"Most of the time it's sit at home. Just have no gumption to get up and go. Unless there is something that I need to do that day."

#### Informal Supports



**Acquaintances** "If I get in trouble, I got people to go to, but no real connection to 'em."

#### Time Orientation



**Stuck** "Where am I now? Where do I stand? What am I doing here? I lost my identity. I feel like a lost kid."

#### Stage of Change



## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

His place

Low

Medium

High

#### Period of living "rough"

Precariously housed (facing eviction)

#### Health/care

Addiction, hereditary hip dysplasia, neck and back injuries

#### Income

Income assistance

### Service Usage

Neighbours Centre

Boyle Macauley

Bottle Depot

Mustard Seed

Royal Alexander Uni

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Becoming Stories

The interview helped Stewart re-discover himself through reflection. How might folks get opportunities outside of therapy to explore stories about who they could be when they've lost touch with themselves?

### Transition Coach

What if there was a service that helped people adapt to changing life and physical circumstances and find new means of employment as their situations change?



# Bruno

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #camping/shelter #planning-change-&-taking-action

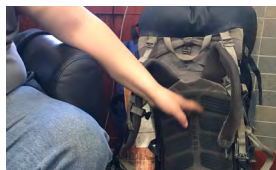
**“The only thing I want in my future, I want a garage full of tools. I can be self-sufficient forever with a garage full of tools.”**

Bruno has spent time homeless in more than eighteen cities since he left home at age 17 in search of work and adventure, a small-town Saskatchewan boy who's been from BC to Mexico, following jobs. He came to Edmonton to leave behind a toxic relationship and the life he'd started to build. He's come to expect people will let him down, whether family, acquaintances, or service providers, disappointment weighing on him like his heavy backpack.

Where he lights up, other than reminiscing about his past adventures, is sharing ideas for how to improve the system. The gap he sees between city leaders, service providers, and

homeless people frustrates him. Having been on both sides, he wants to advocate and be a bridge, to reduce stigma and advise on services. His own ideas range from an Adopt-A-Homeless-Person program to converting old post-boxes into ID storage lockers and more.

Mainly what Bruno's looking for is a place of his own. Somewhere he can channel the energy he focuses on survival into developing a business. He's excited about innovative shelving ideas and resin tables, or making a space where kids can learn to fix their bikes. First he has to figure out his recent rejection from income assistance.



people card

# Bruno

Male  
41  
Métis

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Respect** "People may not like me but they do respect me"

**Self-sufficiency** "The biggest thing is if I do things on my own then nobody can say to me, 'You wouldn't have that if it wasn't for me.'"

**Autonomy** "I want the freedom to only work two hours and not worry if I can eat tomorrow. That's my dream."

### Stressors

**Storage** "If there was a place I could lock this (backpack) up and not have to worry about it, that would be a huge plus to me."

**Health & Well-being** "When you're on the streets, the biggest health concern is footcare."

**Other People** "I don't trust very many people because I've been burned before."

### Potential Enablers

**Past roles**

victim

**Current roles**

leader

protector

### Movement & Terrain

**Strathcona Library**

Spends a lot of time there because it's quiet.

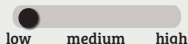
**Ride busses/ trains**

"Sometimes I'll catch a bus to the airport and hike back or take the train all the way to the other end of the city, just to get somewhere new."

**Avoids downtown**

It's busy and violent. "I just try to stay away from the whole downtown area. Try to stay here. Stay quiet. Incognito."

### Informal Supports



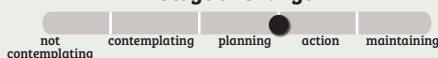
**Friends** "I'm very picky in who I hang out with."  
**Local business owners**

### Time Orientation



I don't make plans for the future because I know 99% of the time they don't work out."

### Stage of Change



## System's perspective

### Life Situation

**Housing**

Slept rough

**Period of living "rough"**

17 years total (5 months in Edmonton currently)

**Health/care**

History of concussion, neurological condition

**Income**

Bottle picking, binning, cash work (Kijiji, Facebook, word of mouth)

### Service Usage

Low

≤ 3

Medium

4-5

High

≥ 6

**Neighbours Centre**

**Bottle Depot**

**Library**

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Makers Collective

What if people could join a collective that gives them access to materials, tools, and space, to make and sell their work and mentor others while they get on their feet?

### Midnight Meals

Daytime meal services don't account for folks with new jobs waiting weeks for a first paycheck, or bottle-pickers working through the night. What if night-shift folks could have a meal without losing income?

### Survival Hub

What if there was a store geared toward the needs of people living rough? One-stop shopping for survival gear, from tents to waterproof socks.



story  
returned



Bill

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #shelter #not-contemplating-change

**“...My history, my background...some answers about what it could have been like if I hadn’t been taken off reserve. Would I have just been another drunk?”**

Bill reflects, “my whole life has always been the same:” a tension between a desire to shape his destiny and to sit with those things he cannot control. “‘It just is,’ that’s my favourite saying.” Still, having been taken from his mother at 3 or 4 years old, Bill learned self-advocacy young. “It’s me who makes the decision. I’ve always known that...I didn’t have anyone to make decisions for me.” Another paradox: Bill is a bit of a loner, but has always been attracted to the idea of collective power, through church, theatre, and political advocacy for Aboriginal women whose children were taken away.

After three years in residential school, Bill grew up in “institutions, group homes,” out of touch but yearning to know more about his identity. After school he spent time on a reserve for cultural training, and has connected to First Nations organizations all his life. A search for family is what brought him back to Edmonton last fall. At first he had a room, but then, he ran out of money. Always nomadic, Bill has travelled the world, using shelters, often with theatre work. To him, a shelter is “not that different from a longhouse.” Currently his focus is to make enough money to get back to Vancouver for end of February.



people card

Bill

Male  
57  
First Nations,  
Métis, Cree

Individual's perspective

## Desired outcomes

**Faith** “Finding out about family history and spirituality.”

**Purpose** “My only purpose right now... is to finish my quest. I gotta do it before everybody dies.”

**Respect** “More like honour. Showing the spiritual respect to a person or process.”

## Stressors

**Work/ money** “Would solve all that.” (stresses at shelter)”

**Sleep** “Tired, and no energy, and can't accomplish anything.”

**Uncertainty** “It's just an inner drive, I guess, that fuels (my quest in Edmonton). I've just got questions in my head and I want to get them out.”

## Potential Enablers

### Past roles

protector	artist	cook	father
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### Current roles

cook	member	protector
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### Movement & Terrain

#### Downtown

Goes downtown daily.

#### South Side

Prefers services on south side as a home base, calmer.

### Informal Supports



Library, Strathcona Baptist Church, Neighbour Centre Lead Cook “I've sort of always been a cook. Part of my survival's relying on my cooking.”

### Time Orientation



“I don't know what the future holds. I can see possibilities of what could happen but I don't know which will.”

### Stage of Change



## System's perspective

## Life Situation

### Housing

Neighbour's Centre  
Mat Program

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

**Period of living “rough”** 2 months (most recently)

### Health/care

### Income

Savings (have run out now)

## Service Usage

### Neighbours Centre

Bissell

Boyle Macauley

The Rock

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Shared Mission Housing

What if there were flexible-term households shaped by a common ambition? An artistic or religious community, for example, with a collective goal and journey?

### Family Ties

What if services were designed with the objective of keeping parents, kids, and siblings connected at all costs? Even in the case of loss of guardianship, divorce, and sickness - to help parents tell kids their stories and to help kids understand and respond.

# Brooklynn



#Edmonton (Strathcona) #precarious-housing/couch-surfing #addictions #planning-change

**"I read a book about co-dependency and I was like 'holy shit! I'm so codependent! I need someone there all the time! I'm so afraid to be alone.'"**

Brooklynn wants to get off meth and be a parent again but she loves a man who's married to the street. Life's full of conundrums: "but I believe we all have choices." "I want him to come with me (to rehab) but I don't want him to change," she says, conflicted. There's no shortage of men in her life but only one she loves. "I'm nobody's girl. But I sleep around, and I have unprotected sex." Brooklynn is smelling of perfume, gazing through startlingly blue contacts, with fresh makeup, and pink streaked hair in a top knot. Her mum, her trustee for AISH, sent \$300 yesterday but "money goes fast!"

Brooklynn was surprised by the \$150 bill at Dollarama. "But I never buy stuff for myself and I really wanted this makeup." After her partner died in 2011, Brooklynn started "taking off all the time." She shacked up with a guy in his trailer and they drank and did drugs all day. He turned jealous and sexually assaulted her. That was when the psychosis began. Since then, she's been diagnosed as bipolar, spent time in the hospital, got medication her band pays for, and layers drinking and drugs on top of that. "I know I shouldn't, but I do."





people card

# Brooklynn

Female  
27  
Cree

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Parenting** "I'll be sitting at home with my daughters and feel happy. I'm going to rehab because they need me."

**Connection** "Being lonely can give you stress? I'm lonely all the time."

**Well-being** "Pint helped me. It made me motivated to do things. I started talking, going out, doing my makeup again."

### Stressors

**Money** "...got to go to work. My last job was in 2000? and...I think it was a labourer. And I was an Assistant Secretary."

**Mental health** "I don't know what's going on up there. I listen to music (to alleviate stress)"

**Addiction** "Like, it stresses me out that I don't know where I'm going to get my next point."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

mother

partner

employee

#### Current roles

mother

daughter

addict

#### Movement & Terrain

##### South side

Because "Donnie is here!"

##### Downtown

Went to Boyle for clothes, goes to City Centre, uses computers at Enterprise Square library, sometimes hangs on Jasper Ave. Seen at Neighbour Centre.

#### Informal Supports



Parents, boyfriends, sister

#### Time Orientation



"It stresses me out that I don't know where I'm going to get my next point from!"

#### Stage of Change



## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

A guy's hotel room (paid \$50)

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

#### Period of living "rough"

On & off for 5 years

#### Health/care

Addictions (meth)

#### Income

AISH

### Service Usage

AISH
Psychiatrist, MD
Poundmaker (rehab)
Beaver Lake (rehab)
Neighbour Centre
Boyle Centre

## Gaps & Opportunities

#### Go Girlfriend

What if there were a relationships coach who'd hangout with you socially, in your context and show you how to do love differently, to lessen co-dependency, or heartbreak?

#### Grief Rehab

What if it was the norm to go on a retreat and get some timely support after losing a loved one or a big break-up? To help process feelings in a way that will help one move forward in time.



# Christopher

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #shelter #addictions #action-for-change

**"I'm coming off the meth. That's the way it usually is...sleep and eat and then go start something again and back to the sketchy stuff all over again. I don't know why I even started shit man."**

Christopher struggles to stay awake. After leaving the shelter at 6AM, he begins looking for warm places to sleep. It's the end of the month, he's coming down off meth, and the urge to sleep is uncontrollable. Around his neck are a set of keys: "I had a...I have a place actually, but I spent like, 3 weeks in my apartment and I kind of like lost my mind...talking to myself and shit. I just wanted to get out and like, socialize around people." It's been a couple of nights at the Neighbour Centre's mat program, on a kind of retreat. When he first got his place, two

years ago, things were better for a bit. He used less meth, his mum visited, he had a girlfriend who didn't do drugs. "My life was pretty awesome." But he kept returning to the meth. All the resources are pretty good, as long as you keep at it," he reflects. "It took me about four years to get on AISH. I wasn't on the ball all the time." He was on the waiting list for Homeward Trust for four years: "I forgot about it. I was like, 'Oh, I guess this is the way life is gonna be. Yeah, I gave up."



people card

# Christopher

Male  
31  
Indigenous

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Faith** "I don't really have any. Other people do. I'd like it."

**Security & Safety** "I don't really know what that would look like. I'm kinda lost right now... It's a physical thing...well, no, mental too, mental calm."

**Family** "That's why I was thinking of going to Cold Lake."

### Stressors

**Mental health** "Hearing voices in my head. I don't like it."

**Purpose** "I'm kinda lost right now."

**Loneliness** "Are you going to follow me around while I sleep all day? (Laughs) Well, at least I'd have company."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

son

brother

#### Current roles

addict

#### Movement & Terrain

##### Downtown

Lives downtown, before coming to the south side, for a kind of retreat. Doesn't know south side; "not allowed in" shelters downtown.

"Before leaving, I had stayed in my bedroom for three weeks."

#### Informal Supports



Family in Cold Lake.

#### Time Orientation



"I'll probably try to go get a hotel or something. But I don't have ID. It's kinda tough without ID."

#### Stage of Change



## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

Shelter/ Mat Program

#### Period of living "rough"

Has an apartment (for 2 years) but walked out this week

#### Health/care

Addictions (meth)

#### Income

AISH

### Service Usage

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

AISH

Homeward Trust

Neighbour Centre

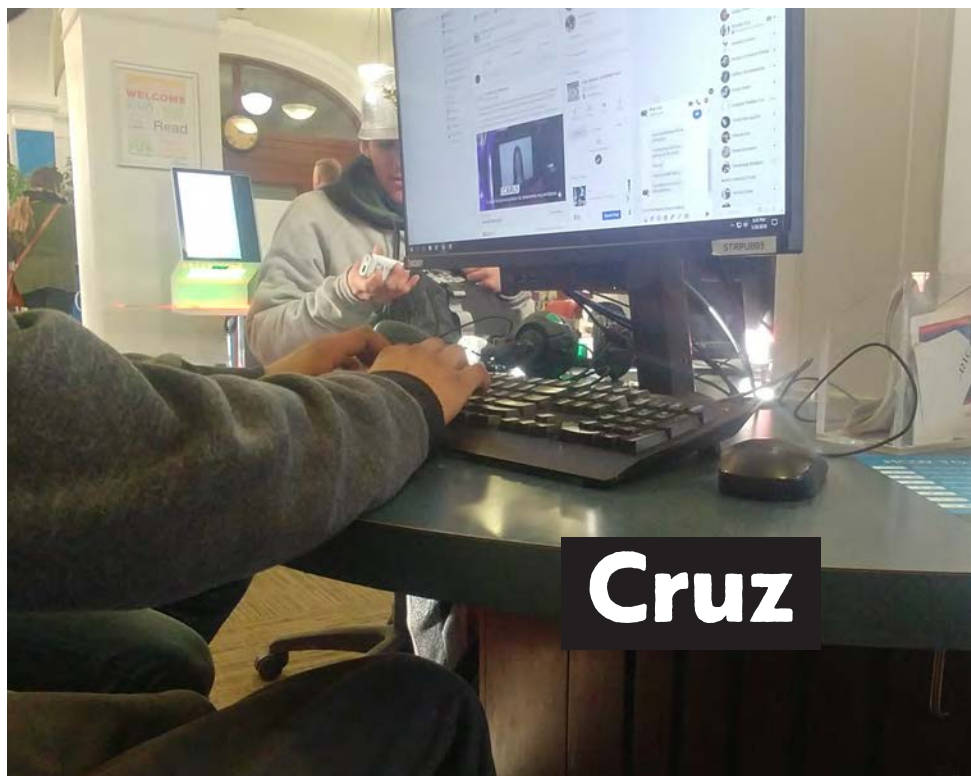
## Gaps & Opportunities

### Structure Builder

What if part of getting housed was support for a systematic, measurable way to build up some positive structures in one's life - networks, routines, and projects - to help one re-orient?

### Budget for Life

Christopher got his trust fund at age 18, and blew it in three months. What if the year before had been a chance to think about what he wanted out of life, start making time investments, and budget his trust fund accordingly?



#Edmonton (Strathcona) #couch-surfing #not-contemplating-change

## **“Life’s easy for me. But I work pretty hard at it.”**

Cruz has swagger. While he claims, grinning, “I am not no salesman...”, it’s hard to take a break. He’s on Facebook Marketplace on his tablet at McDonald’s, buying and selling over breakfast. He asks his friend if he wants to buy the tablet he’s on. The friend, a regular customer, is intrigued, but skeptical, “why do you want to sell it?”

After this, Cruz will head downtown, his preferred “waddling” grounds. He stays at a friend’s place in southgate, but tells us Whyte Ave is “famous for being awful.” He vacillates between projecting ease and control, and showing frustration and

disappointment. Cruz says, “I’m not on AISH or anything like that,” and calls services “unsafe” because you get robbed in shelters. He came down from Yellowknife with his grandma a few years ago, but doesn’t see her anymore, and doesn’t miss Yellowknife. “There’s nothing to do but walk around and end up getting into trouble.” School was “terrible” and there were more bullies in Yellowknife than here in Edmonton. His friend notes older men at a nearby table staring: “Everyone wants to look at you, dude!” Cruz laughs “that’s cause I’m sexy.” But a moment before he’d guessed it was because he’s brown. “It happens all the time.”



people card

Cruz

Male  
19  
Aboriginal

Individual's perspective

## Desired outcomes

**Connection** *"Meeting people that are solid... don't fuck me over; help me out."*

**Comfort** *"(My friend's place) is comfortable for right now."*

**Purpose** *"To be important: if I just disappeared people would notice. I'm a pretty big deal. I help out a lot of people."*

## Stressors

**Relationships** Untrustworthy and unreliable people.

**Doesn't express many pain points.**

## Potential Enablers

### Past roles

student

grandson

### Current roles

entrepreneur

friend

### Movement & Terrain

#### Downtown

*"People on Whyte Ave are awful. Downtown is better."*

Goes to Enterprise Square/library, City Centre. Stays with friend in Southgate. Showed up at the Armoury (restricted), Strathcona Library.

### Informal Supports

low medium high *"I know half the city"*

### Time Orientation

past present future

### Stage of Change

not contemplating contemplating planning action maintaining

## System's perspective

## Life Situation

### Housing

Friend's place

**Period of living "rough"** 2 years

### Health/care

### Income

Buying & selling found & stolen goods

## Service Usage

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

Restricted from The Armoury on the day we met

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Structure Builder

Cruz is a networker. Right now, his network is good for the street, and doing business there. What if he were introduced to a series of events and routines designed to help him network his way to a different world, and perhaps, a business degree?



# Dakota

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #camping #not-contemplating-&-contemplating

## **"I didn't know about services at 15 when I really needed them."**

This was the first year after aging out of the youth shelter. "Instead of doing meth or speed, I go bottle picking." On cold nights, "I stay up to stay warm, I walk." With a bad back and a series of health conditions, including PTSD and bipolar, Dakota is an insomniac. No warm, safe place to be at night has increased his self-medication (synthetic cannabinoids.) The adult shelter is at a church, a no-go zone for this particular practising pagan.

The Gaelic for "Silver Wolf Shadow" is jiffied on his right hand. Dakota sees himself as a helper who can move through a variety of complex

territories "if I need to get something done." He is also a ballpoint pen artist, and poet. The Armoury helped him get into a local show, though he never attended: "life got in the way." Today, Dakota's younger brother, with the vibe of an old war vet, regales us with a description of a camp he once founded in the ravine, with four levels of hierarchy, including enforcers. Dakota quips, "where you had enforcers, I would have democrats," summing up their differences. While their father pulled Dakota out of school at 15, to work; he says, "I pride myself on...not being educated, but knowledgeable."



people card

Dakota

Male  
22  
Pagan

Individual's perspective

## Desired outcomes

**Achievement** *Knowing “if I need something done, I can get it done.”*

**Faith** *“True pagans go through a 7 year initiation. I call mine a living hell. I’ve had health problems older people shouldn’t and don’t have.”*

**Connection** *“...the faith I have that allows me to connect with anyone I need to.”*

## Stressors

**Mental health** *“That’s my biggest problem, I can’t ask people for help to get off the street.”*

**Addiction.** *Herbal incense no longer gets him high, it’s just an addiction to service.*

**Physical health & Pain** *“My ex took a hammer to my back because I wasn’t making enough money”*

**Lack of sleep** *“Dreaming while awake”*

## Potential Enablers

### Past roles

construction worker youth

### Current roles

protector helper

### Movement & Terrain

Avoids downtown

Downtown has too many provocations. *“I don’t go downtown because, I’m not a fighter but if I do, I’m dangerous. So I stay on the south side.”*

### Informal Supports

low medium high Brother, street connections.

### Time Orientation

past present future *“I need to panhandle today.”*

### Stage of Change

not contemplating contemplating planning action maintaining

## System's perspective

## Life Situation

### Housing

Camping

**Period of living “rough”** 3 years

### Health/care

ADD, PTSD, bipolar, anxiety

### Income

Bottle picking, panhandling, selling rolling paper at drop-ins

## Service Usage

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

Old Strathcona Youth Society

The Armoury

Doctor

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Insomniacs’ Dream Club

Runs 24 hours, with computers, coffee, dimmed lighting, comfy places to recline, headphones, and pretty strict rules to keep noise down. The space is compartmentalized so no one space ever feels crowded.

### Labour Scouts

What if there were scouts on the ground to identify unemployed people’s talents and work ethic, and help midwife them into jobs that could help them grow and develop?



**Earl**

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #with-friend #planning-&-action

**“Things are going to get better, I can make things better. It’s up to me. I’ve got the choice. I’d like it to happen. I’d like to have a relationship with my son... with my family, with everybody.”**

Earl describes the birth of his son with awe, and pride: “I was right in there. I cut the umbilical cord.” He and his partner cleaned up. No more crack. His relationship had its problems but they were both devoted to their son. Earl finds purpose through helping others, (“something I got from my mother, that I wish I hadn’t”) which made it hard when he was laid off his trucking job and felt underappreciated at home. 2013 was the last good year. He and his partner separated weeks into 2014. Earl struggles with trust, but his emotions are hard to conceal: regret, hope, and a rage that rises to the

surface periodically. For example, when he thinks about his home support worker, who ignored his appeals for help, then abandoned him, only seven months in: “I’ve been in life skills, years ago, so I know when you’ve got an addiction it’s a learning curve. But I looked to her, and she just wasn’t there.” Rehab experiences have felt much the same.

Earl picks both copper and bottles, but sees “a legitimate job” as a condition of his recovery; self-esteem that comes from a job well done is a great motivation for him.



people card

Earl

Male  
50  
Polish-Canadian,  
Métis

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Achievement** "Something I've got to gain. (Right now) it's when I put my pipe down for a few days at a time and I can work and save the money that I need."

**Respect** "Caring for someone else's feelings, listening to what people have to say, accepting people."

**Contribution** "Helping [a friend] stay off the streets...I would go out and pick copper, the fridge was always full."

### Stressors

**Loneliness** "Yeah, I'm just a lonely renter. You know that feeling when you get home? Well, there's none of that."

**Trust** "I like to learn a lot about a person. I got huge trust issues. And the minute I start to feel that something's, maybe, compromised? The walls go up." "(I trust myself) very little."

**Work & money** "How am I supposed to pay off (debt to maintenance & enforcement) if I can't work, because I don't have my license?"

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

provider

spouse

father

worker

learner

#### Current roles

#### Movement & Terrain

##### South side

Crosses the river often, has been housed on the south side. Stayed with friends on both sides, used services on both sides.

Covers a lot of area on bicycle.

#### Informal Supports

low medium high

Brother, recovered friend, friends with resources, church, Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

#### Time Orientation

past present future

"I don't want to go back to how I used to be...I think it's something that has to be cold turkey."

#### Stage of Change

not contemplating contemplating planning action maintaining

## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

Informal sublet at friends

Low  
≤ 3

#### Period of living "rough"

5 months since his name was on a lease

#### Health/care

Trying to quit smoking speed, two broken heels

#### Income

Copper picking, bottle picking, Alberta Works

### Service Usage

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

Alberta Works

Probation Officer

Royal Alex Hospital

Homeward Trust

Poundmakers (rehab)

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Sober Companion

When you are determined to kick the habit, what if there were someone experienced to walk alongside you? To keep up motivation & accountability? When rehab hasn't been right for you, or you've got paid work to be present for?

### Free Agent Support Worker

What if support workers were free agents contracted and reviewed by end users, and helped to negotiate entitlements with the system, rather than being of the system, to build a sense of trust and 'in this together'?

**Gil**



#Edmonton (Strathcona) #sleeping-rough #planning-&-action

**“Mum and dad, it didn’t matter what I did. I could have killed someone and they’d have welcomed me back home.”**

Gil’s life plays like a country song, about a loveable outlaw. He’d call it “Mama Tried.” As with any good country song it’s dripping with life lessons, but also, dramatic irony. Like the time he got out of jail on probation, got his Class 1 license and was immediately hired to drive all over Alberta...shipping weapons for National Defense. In the chorus he’d return home to his ma and pa in the country who love their prodigal son unconditionally. And there’d be verses about hard times, like this one. Life right now is “just a whirlwind.” Three months ago he “lost everything”

after getting back into drugs, letting people into his apartment, and cashing a cheque for people he “thought were friends.” “When I lost my last place I flipped out, got mad at a lot of people, when I should have just got mad at myself for letting it happen.” Gil struggles to stay awake whenever there is a break in conversation. He’s long struggled with sleep and drugs, which he accepts as part of the legacy of seeing his birth mother shoot herself in front of him, at age 8. “I don’t like sleeping at night because I have nightmares and I don’t like sleeping during the day because I miss out.”





people card

**Gil**

Male  
61  
White

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Independence** "I've always gone out to earn for myself...it's okay to accept help but it's give and take."

**Respect** "It's not given, you have to earn it. If you don't have respect, you've got nothing."

**Self-acceptance** "I've accepted what I've become. I have always taken responsibility for my actions: accept, and move on, try to be better."

### Stressors

**Transportation & transit.** No drivers license (fines), bike stolen 3 weeks ago. Turned down exciting job at the wreckers because not transit route there.

**Housing** "It's stressful. Just (looking for) somewhere to hang my hat and a garage to keep me out of trouble."

**Addiction** "Trouble that comes looking for me is drugs and alcohol. It relaxes me, makes me wanna eat - and I'm diabetic so I need to eat all the time."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

brother

son

daredevil

trucker

#### Current roles

caregiver

father

son

diabetic

mechanic

#### Movement & Terrain

##### Avoids downtown

Has "too many people, raises my anxiety...One service office (AISH) means huge volume." Previously seriously beat up after dealing marijuana downtown.

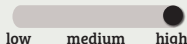
##### Avoids shelters

"I've been robbed and beat up." (Has been affiliated with Hell's Angels in past, wears biker jewelry)

##### Whyte Ave

Neighbour Centre, fast food places, library.

#### Informal Supports



Friends, Strathcona Library

#### Time Orientation



"I'd like to have a place (lined up) by Monday or Tuesday." (It's Friday)

#### Stage of Change



## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

Sleeping rough (public washrooms)

**Period of living "rough"** 3 months

#### Health/care

Addictions (speed, coke), depression, PTSD, diabetes

#### Income

AISH, entrepreneurial (car & bike mechanical services for friends)

### Service Usage

Low

≤ 3

Medium

4-5

High

≥ 6

AISH

Neighbours Centre

Doctors, GP (Millwoods)

## Gaps & Opportunities

#### Meaningful roles

Gil's always understood kids, especially those with exceptionalities, and he understands trauma from experience. What if he could be trained for a part-time role as a resource, to after school programs, for example?

#### Mechanically Minded

Many folks on the streets have mechanical skills and a desire to channel some energy positively. What if there were a paired community workshop and napping space: have a nap (and detox) before entering the shop to work on a personal or community project.

story  
returned

# Marilyn

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #shelter/couch-surfing #contemplating-change

**"I've been through so many things. There wouldn't be enough time for me to tell all the things that happened to me. Life goes on. They say when you suffer, it brings you closer to God."**

Marilyn is nodding off over a coffee in the A&W. She's been warned by staff already not to fall asleep, and our conversation is an opportunity to sit in the warmth a few hours longer. Newly homeless in Edmonton, she's figuring out how to stay warm, clean, and safe. It's not easy. She needs a roommate, but doesn't know how to find someone she can trust.

Marilyn's been here since July and homeless for the last two months. She came from Prince George to get away from her ex and the drugs that were part of their relationship. She

got healthier when she lost access to her supply, but she's using again. Her relationship with dope has been fuelled by struggles like giving her son up in order to stay in his life and losing her twin sister suddenly to a heart attack eight years ago.

Her life has been full of ups and downs, like a mountain range. "Being on top is just being happy with myself. I'm getting there. I'm making my own decisions." She's looking for the straight-and-narrow path: getting off heroin, into her own place and back to school.



people card

# Marilyn

Female  
45  
Cree/ Métis

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Respect** "How you earn respect is you show respect."

**Health & Well-being** "Hygiene is really important to me."

**Achievement** "Getting my education done. And to have my kids be proud of me, be a role model."

### Stressors

**Addiction** "Sometimes I'm making excuses to myself but sometimes I just, I like it."

**Relationships** "Women here, they tend to get really jealous. I'm intimidated by the men here sometimes. They're kind of bossy."

**Too much and too little time** "Too little time to do everything I want to do. Too much time to wait for things."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

mother

caregiver

athlete

worker

victim

#### Current roles

volunteer

addict

survivor

protector

#### Movement & Terrain

##### Whyte Ave

In Strathcona, moving between Neighbours Centre, fast food restaurants, hospital, library, parks in the summer.

Sometimes sleeps at friends' and daughter's place

##### Downtown sometimes but avoids

"I just couldn't deal with downtown, the Co-op, they have so many people. They just don't have time and money to help."

#### Informal Supports

low medium high

Family, growing network of friends, guy she likes  
"I make friends everywhere I go"

#### Time Orientation

past present future

"I want to be a mother again. I want to be an athlete again."

#### Stage of Change

not contemplating contemplating planning action maintaining

## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

Shelter, couch-surfing

**Period of living "rough"** 2 months

#### Health/care

Addiction, depression

#### Income

Binning, bottle picking

### Service Usage

Library

Neighbours Centre

co-op

Needle Exchange

church

## Gaps & Opportunities

#### Volun-Tour

What if there was a rotation of pre-arranged volunteer opportunities throughout the community, with festivals, agencies, and local businesses, for folks like Marilyn to try out?

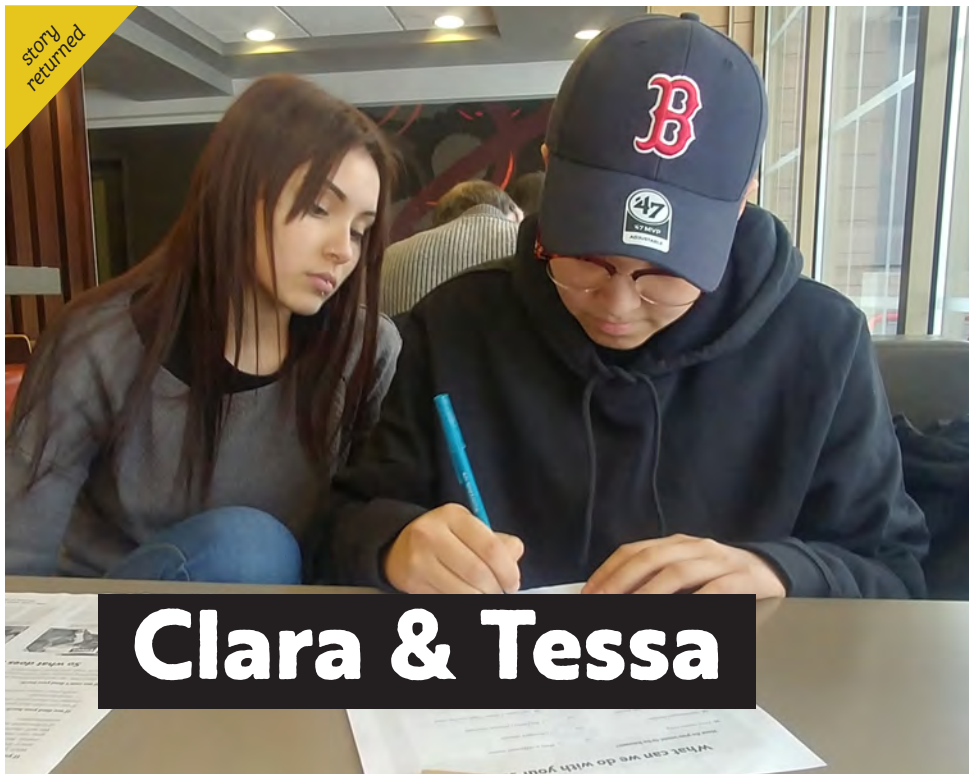
#### Skill Swap

Everyone's got something they're good at. What if there was a service for people to sign up with skills they can teach and skills they want to learn?

#### Mobile Classrooms

What if there were roving pop-up classrooms introducing people to topics offered at local colleges so folks can explore their interests while working toward their goals?

story  
returned

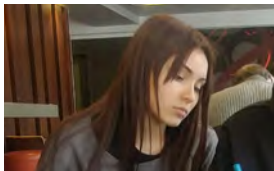


#Edmonton (Strathcona) #shelter #planning-change-&-taking-action

**“When we were living with her mum we didn’t get anything done. We were just cleaning and babysitting all the time. Now we’re using the full resources to get housing and get stuff done.”**

Clara and Tessa are from “two totally different groups.” In Winnipeg, Clara hung with the smart kids in school. Tessa, working in a call centre, had older, quieter friends. This past week, they’ve stuck together, going from the YESS shelter to its drop-in, exploring the rest of Edmonton feels “a bit risky... We already know the kids (at YESS) and don’t really want to let others into our circle.” Their relationship has acted like a protective bubble. “Sometimes we just ride the train back and forth. Winnipeg doesn’t have a train.” When they’ve been to the mall, they’ve mostly stuck to themselves. “Tessa gets bad anxiety” ...so, stealing (with the other

kids) isn’t something she would do.” Clara’s mum “didn’t like it,” when they started dating. In November, she moved them both to Edmonton. Clara calls her mum “controlling,” Tessa, “a homophobe.” It all went down over a little thing, but a week later, they were locked out of the house. Police called 24/7 Crisis Diversion to take them to YESS. Clara “was mainly worried about not finishing school. I just thought it was going to go downhill from there.” “But it’s been quite the opposite!” says Tessa. Clara goes quiet when talk turns to the siblings she’s left behind. They expect to be housed through an LGBTQ program within 3 weeks.



people card

# Clara

Female  
17  
First Nations (Plains  
Cree, Stoney)

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Good adventure** "Travel the world"

**Independence** "I don't like other people sticking up for me because I don't want to give anyone that power."

**Security & safety** "Well I want to be able to feel safe wherever I am, and not be hit on by all the tweaked out meth heads...it's both environment and something I create for myself."

### Stressors

**Family.** Becomes quiet as we talk about her younger siblings. When they get their place, "Tessa's family will come over, but not mine." About calling cops to get Tessa's stuff from Clara's mum: "I didn't want to but I had to."

**Harassment** "(At YESS) all the guys are hitting on Clara."

**Achievement** "I need to graduate. Go to university, hopefully in law enforcement... have a job, house, and care for the people that care for me."

### Potential Enablers

**Past roles**

sister

student

**Current roles**

self-advocate

protector

**Movement & Terrain**

Mostly Nexus-Armoury

Malls

Southgate, Bonny Doone.

Ride trains

Downtown

Want apartment downtown.

**Informal Supports**

low medium high

Tessa's mum has sent them some money. Each other.

**Time Orientation**

past present future

"We get to pick our place ...we're not too far from the Armoury if we're downtown."

**Stage of Change**

not contemplating contemplating planning action maintaining

## System's perspective

### Life Situation

**Housing**

NEXUS, YESS shelter

**Period of living "rough"** 1 week

**Health/care**

**Income**

Help from Tessa's mum.  
Soon, income supports.

### Service Usage

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

YESS Shelter, NEXUS

YESS Drop-In, Armoury

Strathcona library

LGBTQ Housing Program

Bold Eagle Camp

Bridging the Gap

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Skip the Shelter

What if youth who were having relationship troubles with parents could apply to move into temporary housing, and get help to work on their relationship with parents/siblings, skipping the shelter altogether?

### How it Happened on Youtube

What if people who make it out of the shelter were invited to record a quick video about how they managed to move forward, so that others in a bad situation, or just entering the shelter can learn and calibrate expectations?



story  
returned



# Clara & Tessa

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #shelter #planning-change-&-taking-action

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kids) isn’t something she would do.” Clara’s mum “didn’t like it,” when they started dating. In November, she moved them both to Edmonton. Clara calls her mum “controlling,” Tessa, “a homophobe.” It all went down over a little thing, but a week later, they were locked out of the house. Police called 24/7 Crisis Diversion to take them to YESS. Clara “was mainly worried about not finishing school. I just thought it was going to go downhill from there.” “But it’s been quite the opposite!” says Tessa. Clara goes quiet when talk turns to the siblings she’s left behind. They expect to be housed through an LGBTQ program within 3 weeks.



people card

# Tessa

Female  
19  
First Nations  
(Ojibway)

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Respect** "A lot of people aren't respectful to the staff...you can see they're frustrated. Respect has just always been a big thing for me."

**Security & safety** "I feel alright. I don't think anyone will hurt us. I don't want to put myself in danger in any way."

**Purpose/ achievement** "I'm very motivated to get my own house, because I've never had that before. I've always just rented out a room with family."

### Stressors

**Relationships** "I do everything for that woman (Clara's mum) and she still doesn't like me."

**Health** "Tessa gets bad anxiety."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

volunteer/ mentor

caregiver

artist

#### Current roles

artist

protector

#### Movement & Terrain

Mostly Nexus-Armoury

Malls

Southgate, Bonny Doone.

Ride trains

Downtown

Want apartment downtown.

#### Informal Supports



Tessa's mum has sent them some money. Each other.

#### Time Orientation



"We get to pick our place ...we're not too far from the Armoury if we're downtown."

#### Stage of Change



### System's perspective

#### Life Situation

##### Housing

NEXUS, YESS shelter

**Period of living "rough"** 1 week

##### Health/care

Anxiety

##### Income

Help from Tessa's mum.  
Soon, income supports.

#### Service Usage

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

YESS Shelter, NEXUS  
YESS Drop-In, Armoury  
Strathcona library  
LGBTQ Housing Program  
Bold Eagle Camp  
Bridging the Gap

### Gaps & Opportunities

#### Skip the Shelter

What if youth who were having relationship troubles with parents could apply to move into temporary housing, and get help to work on their relationship with parents/siblings, skipping the shelter altogether?

#### How it Happened on Youtube

What if people who make it out of the shelter were invited to record a quick video about how they managed to move forward, so that others in a bad situation, or just entering the shelter can learn and calibrate expectations?

story  
returned

# Jailene & Hunter

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #shelter #planning-change-&-taking-action

**"It's lucky you caught us today, because after tomorrow morning, we won't be here."**

Jailene and Hunter describe their bout of homelessness as about waiting: waiting for work to start up again, waiting to cash RRSPs, get Jailene's next assistance cheque. After Jailene's brother returned home to their mum's place from prison, an old, abusive cycle re-started, complete with the part where Jailene gets kicked out. "I've dealt with it my whole life...it's actually been worse." Hunter didn't go back up to his logging camp after they met this summer, so they found themselves jobless and homeless.

Now they've arranged work in a northern camp for early March. "It's lucky you caught us today," Hunter

explained, "because after tomorrow morning, we won't be here." As in, using the shelter, the Neighbour Centre, cheap motels, and the A&W. Before work, they're planning a little holiday, to Vancouver: "Since we've met, all we've been doing is this. And we figure if we got through all of this together, we're curious to see where it will go...if we actually have some fun." Two and three days later, they are still at the Neighbour Centre. Frustration is high: Jailene's check has been "cut without warning," her social worker is unsympathetic, and they are looking for advice about how to get things back on track.



people card

Female

21

Polish-Canadian

Jailene

Individual's perspective

## Desired outcomes

**Purpose** *"We make a list everyday (of what we will accomplish) and copy it out until it's perfect."*

**Security & safety** *"Now we're both focused on the white picket fence: security, and a house, and no bullshit."*

**Pleasure** *"Affection and comfort with someone. Both of us are very codependent. We do a lot together."*

## Stressors

**Too much/too little time** *"I would say (we spend) 80% of our time (waiting)... It's literally that's how you kill your time. Instead of breaking down the whole day you're like 'oh, we've got one hour.'"*

**Services** J's social worker "gets personal" in her attacks, it "feels abusive."

**Family & Relationships** Boss helped them out of a tight spot but "didn't appreciate it," J's mum" afraid of her brother...always takes his side."

## Potential Enablers

### Past roles

ward

sister

daughter

### Current roles

### Movement & Terrain

**Mostly south side (Whyte Ave)**

Jailene's mum lives blocks from shelter

**Malls**

**Occasional trips downtown**

To see social worker in basement of Boyle.

**Knight's Inn, Royal Lodge**

Stay at Knight's Inn, Royal Lodge when they have money.

### Informal Supports

low medium high

Hunter's boss, Jean (Knight's Inn), Abhishek (IDA Pharmacy), Jailene's mom.

### Time Orientation

past present future

*"We make a list everyday and copy it out until it's perfect."*

### Stage of Change

not contemplating contemplating planning action maintaining

## System's perspective

## Life Situation

### Housing

Shelter (Mat Program)

Low

Medium

High

**Period of living "rough"** 2 months

### Health/care

Epilepsy

### Income

Hunter's savings (ran out), RRSPs (soon), Jailene's social assistance

## Service Usage

social worker

Boyle Street

24/7 Crisis Diversion

Neighbours Centre

mat program

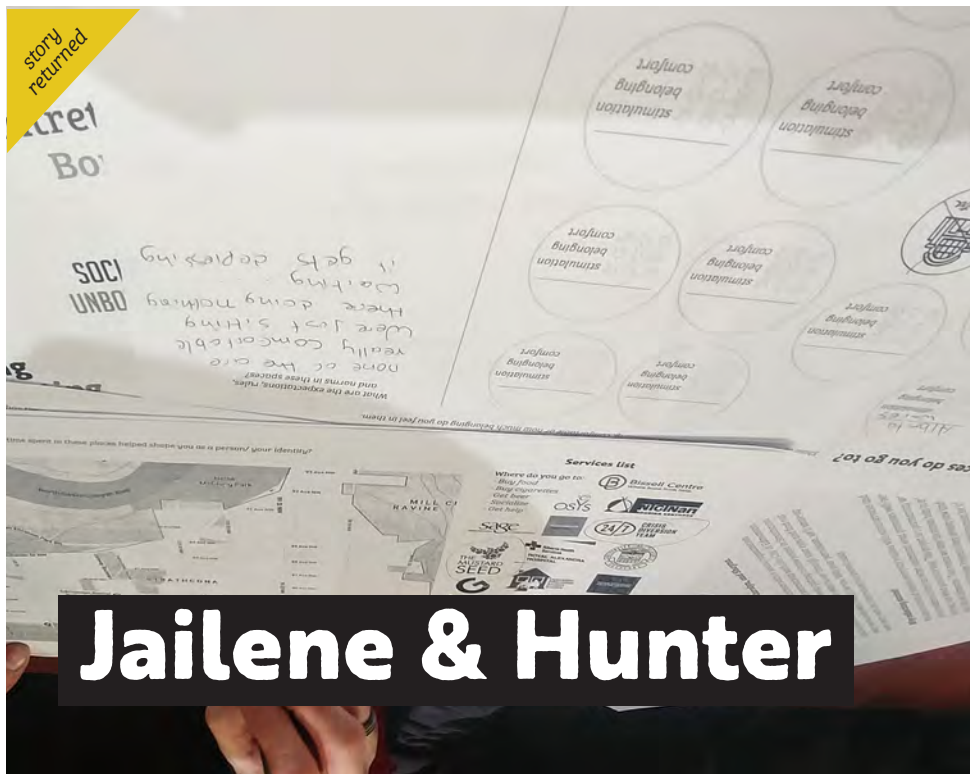
## Gaps & Opportunities

### In & Out Services

What if people experiencing very recent and/or first-time homelessness accessed services differently, like the emergency room in hospital, rather than making a doctor's appointment? To minimize exposure to the street.

### Free Agent Support Worker

What if support workers were free agents contracted and reviewed by end users, and helped to negotiate entitlements with the system, rather than being of the system, to build a sense of trust and 'in this together'?



# Jailene & Hunter

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #shelter #planning-change-&-taking-action

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people card

# Hunter

Male  
38  
German-Canadian

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Purpose** "We make a list everyday (of what we will accomplish) and copy it out until it's perfect."

**Security & safety** "Now we're both focused on the white picket fence: security, and a house, and no bullshit."

**Pleasure** "Affection and comfort with someone. Both of us are very codependent. We do a lot together."

**Connection** "Connection is friends...I don't have any."

### Stressors

**Too much/too little time** "I would say (we spend) 80% of our time (waiting)... It's literally that's how you kill your time. Instead of breaking down the whole day you're like 'oh, we've got one hour.'"

**Services** J's social worker "gets personal" in her attacks, it "feels abusive."

**Family & Relationships** Boss helped them out of a tight spot but "didn't appreciate it," J's mum" afraid of her brother...always takes his side."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

worker

father

spouse

provider

drinker

#### Current roles

#### Movement & Terrain

**Mostly south side (Whyte Ave)**

Jailene's mum lives blocks from shelter

**Malls**

**Occasional trips downtown**

To see social worker in basement of Boyle.

**Knight's Inn, Royal Lodge**

Stay at Knight's Inn, Royal Lodge when they have money.

#### Informal Supports

low medium high

Hunter's boss, Jean (Knight's Inn), Abhishek (IDA Pharmacy), Jailene's mom.

#### Time Orientation

past present future

"We make a list everyday and copy it out until it's perfect."

#### Stage of Change

not contemplating contemplating planning action maintaining

## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

Shelter (Mat Program)

**Period of living "rough"** 2 months

#### Health/care

Epilepsy

#### Income

Hunter's savings (ran out), RRSPs (soon), Jailene's social assistance

### Service Usage

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

social worker

Boyle Street

24/7 Crisis Diversion

Neighbours Centre

mat program

## Gaps & Opportunities

#### In & Out Services

What if people experiencing very recent and/or first-time homelessness accessed services differently, like the emergency room in hospital, rather than making a doctor's appointment? To minimize exposure to the street.

#### Free Agent Support Worker

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story  
returned



**Renee**

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #sleeping-rough #contemplating-change

**"This year is going to be different. We're going to get a place, whether it's through housing or not. I'm going to help David get on income support and go back to school."**

We found Renee first de-thawing at 630am at McDonald's, her neatly braided hair and serene smile showing little sign of the blustery outdoors where she sleeps and works. By 930am, break is over. She treks outside, bags in tow. Binning is almost a sixth sense. "I love it when it's break-up season: you get a lot of good stuff." She's quick to spot an opportunity, and even quicker to spot a scam, taking out a leather-bound notebook (a good find!) and meticulously recording her bounty for the day. \$30: enough for a mickey of vodka and \$15 of pint. We lost Renee. Somewhere between the street and the camp she's set-up for herself, her adult son, his girlfriend,

and the odd stray to which she tends and mends. "I don't like the shelters. When I stayed in the shelters downtown, I got sick all the time. You have to get up at like 6-630am, and then you have to wait..." Still, Renee's presence is everywhere. Abhineet at Tops Liquor tell us, "I trust her. I let her be in charge of the counter sometimes. I charge her phone." A lot of people trust Renée: violent men, with reputations, crazed women, mourning the loss of their children. "I've thought about it on and off," Renee admits. "I can't see myself a social worker, but maybe like a counselor, helping people by walking around at whatever hours."



people card

# Renee

Female  
56  
Dene / North West  
Territories

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Connection & Care** "Don't judge a book by its cover. Look what's inside. A lot of people seem hardcore, but once you get to know 'em.... I get [them] to open-up and see the real person."

**Independence** "Anything a man can do, I can do."

**Integrity** "If you ever came to my place [speaking of a past apartment], you could eat off the floor..."

### Stressors

**Housing** "I'm upset with my housing worker, she didn't get my mail moved, and I lost my benefits...And when you work with Homeward Trust, the landlords are on you 24-7."

**Health & Wellbeing** "One hard thing about being homeless is holding onto ID. I was supposed to go to the ER. My leg swells up. I don't go. I have lost my card."

**Grief & Loss** "You lose a lot of friends. It can be nerve wracking."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

heavy equipment operator

home health aide

mother

wife

#### Current roles

mother

friend

#### Movement & Terrain

##### Stays on south side

"It's a lot less crazy on this side. There's some big differences. The meals are better on this side...And the Neighbour Centre is actually willing to be there to help, they get in your face to ask about your day."

Bottle Depot

Gateway McDonald's

Tops Liquor Store

#### Informal Supports

low medium high

Self-reliance, bros, son, local businesses

#### Time Orientation

past present future

"I'm going to move my camp... People are starting to like my tent, there is too many people, and some things are going missing."

#### Stage of Change

not contemplating contemplating planning action maintaining

## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

Outside in tent

#### Period of living "rough"

2.5 years on South side (with 6-weeks of housing)

#### Health/care

Addiction (alcohol, pint)

#### Income

AISH (has to re-apply)  
Binning

### Service Usage

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

AISH

Neighbourhood Centre

Criminal Justice System

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Housing Doula

Just like Doulas focus on the emotional health of the mother, what if there were emotional supports when moving into a new home: someone who has been there before to help you navigate new relationship boundaries and "nest" in your space?

### Walker Talker

What if Renee was part of a roving listening team, supporting people whenever and wherever suits them, in exchange for points to improve her credit score and grants to use towards home & outdoor goods? What if that listening team had access to a range of therapeutic tools from art, music, animals, etc.?



# Auntie A

#Edmonton (Strathcona) #sleeping-rough #contemplating-change

**"I ask every day: what am I here to do? We sit back and ask each other what are we here for?"**

Auntie A's got style. She's sporting a royal purple bag alongside short red hair, a sparkly top, and sunglasses. But it's Auntie A's hands that tell a bruising story. Battered and weathered, yet bedazzled, they suggest an owner immune to the elements. For twenty years, Auntie A has braved extreme environments. At 5 she started smoking hash. By 13, she ran away from a group home. School was a place to be proudly expelled from — not to attend. She feels similarly about shelters. "Plus, it's not my thing to take a bed. I am homeless. I don't need it. I can be outside." She prefers the South Side these days: "I am banned from downtown and it's more calmer, not too messy here." She bounces between her tent, a hotel room (when there's money), short-lived apartments

(it's too easy to let the wrong people in), jail, and back. Her first stint in the pen was in her early 20s. That's when her "father figure" — an older brother — passed away — part of a string of losses: exes, miscarriages, kids in care, and most recently, the death of the birth mother she never knew. The 20K she got for her land claim disappeared in under a month. She's tried plenty over the years: volunteer work at Boyle ("I stopped going, there was a lot of bullshit in the kitchen"); detox (particularly after losing a kidney); counseling; journaling. "I used to journal every day but there were all these privacy concerns with that information on the street." Not long ago, she got back with an ex. This one is an artist, and she has hope.



people card

# Auntie A

Female  
39  
Cree

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Respect** "You give and earn respect. That's what I was taught and that's how you survive. I got a lot of that."

**Health & Well-Being** "I do worry about my health sometimes. I've been out here for a long time. Cancer worries me and my gallbladder. I am not scared of going..."

**Safety & Security** "I hear threats when I'm drinking.. I am stubborn and I don't ask for help. People say, 'Auntie, take care of yourself. Stop taking care of your exes.'"

### Stressors

**Relationship & family** "My exes always seem to come back." / "I am the youngest, my brother is always nagging me on Facebook."

**Grief & Loss** "I got a lot of that. I've taken too many counseling classes."

**Addiction** "I am slowing down... I do notice they don't have a detox on the South side."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

mother daughter volunteer gang member

#### Current roles

addict friend counselor

#### Movement & Terrain

Mostly south side

"I'm not allowed downtown because of the cops. I have been over here for 2-3 years...Over here, most of us are going to the Neighbour Centre. The thing is one you go in there, they don't let you leave."

Knights Inn, Royal Lodge

Stays there on pay day: \$79/night

H2O Lounge

Stays there on pay day: \$79/night

#### Informal Supports



Boyfriends, best friend

#### Time Orientation



"I see myself as busy. I always have to be busy or I am Houdini."

#### Stage of Change



## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

Outside in tent

#### Period of living "rough"

20 years on & off

#### Health/care

Addiction (alcohol, meth); kidney disease

#### Income

AISH

### Service Usage

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

AISH  
Neighbourhood Centre  
Criminal Justice System

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Healing Space

There are few places Auntie A can go on the South side during the day. "People get laughed at or kicked out of coffee shops." What if there was a co-working type space dedicated to healing where Auntie A could treat her health as a kind of job with perks?

### Grief Rehab

What if it was the norm to go on a retreat and get some timely support after losing a loved one or a big break-up? To help process feelings in a way that will help one move forward in time.





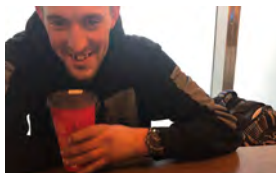
# Brian

#Edmonton (Strathcona & City Centre Mall) #sleeping-rough #pre-contemplation

**"I lead a WOW life. I don't even try to. I try to be chill, but it doesn't work that way. I get myself into situations. Odd situations."**

Brian is a fast talker who holds little back. A couple of years ago, he had a \$1000/month apartment, a job in construction, a girlfriend, and a \$300/month pint habit. He's lost it all, except the pint and the coke. He's worried he might be in too deep: "I am an adrenaline junkie... All I do is shoot. I used to smoke it. I will be up for the next couple of days." His last decent sleep was last night in the hospital waiting room: 6 hrs to see a doctor about his jaw infection. From there, he met-up with a friend (Cruz) at the McDonald's on 109, crossed to Downtown, hustled, got confrontational, sold some dope, and came to City Centre Mall, where we serendipitously run into him for a second time in a day. He's

crashing at an abandoned house on the South side, which he prefers: the cops are nicer. Jail scares him. "I don't understand the logic of that place...It was brutal, there." He also doesn't understand what he sees as the relationship lottery. "I want somebody who will handle me at my worst. Fuck, why is no there for me?" After his fiancée left, things went downhill, fast. "I can't budget." He wonders aloud whether he's becoming like his dad ("He was a druggie"), acknowledging that women and jobs are the only things that's calmed him down. "I can't stay in no shelter. What I need is the right person to say I will help you if you will help you."



people card

# Brian

Male  
28  
White

## Individual's perspective

### Desired outcomes

**Comfort** "I used to have a house with a fireplace. I had it all."

**Pleasure** "How you dress and how much money you pull out of your wallet is how society looks at you. It's fucked up. Why bother [with the rat race]: people will judge me whether I'm homeless or working."

**Adventure** "I can feel anxious. But energy is a magical thing, you feel you can do anything. I am an adrenaline junkie."

### Stressors

**Loneliness** "Just because I hit a rough patch, and I didn't have someone there to care, I'm here. My mom wants to hear from me, but every time I talk to her, she says she is worried. I hate telling her my sad stories."

**Judgment / Shame** "If you are a crack head or a pinter, they judge you. This one is worse than the other. Except for heroin, crack is no better than speed."

**Relationships** "My fiancée left me broken. didn't start shooting until after she left. Six times a day."

### Potential Enablers

#### Past roles

employee

fiancée

son

construction worker

#### Current roles

addict

hustler

criminal

survivor

#### Movement & Terrain

"I am everywhere. I am all over the city."

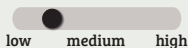
##### South side

"There's no place to get needles on the South side... They are more easy going, the cops are more polite."

##### City Centre Mall

"Downtown is a place to spend money, they judge you more, there is more bad people."

#### Informal Supports



Street friends but ... "So tired of the judgement of society, of friends, of cops."

#### Time Orientation



#### Stage of Change



## System's perspective

### Life Situation

#### Housing

Outside in abandoned house

**Period of living "rough"** 1.5 years

#### Health/care

Addiction (coke, meth); jaw infection

#### Income

Hustling

### Service Usage

Low  
≤ 3

Medium  
4-5

High  
≥ 6

Hospital emergency  
Neighbourhood Centre  
Criminal Justice System

## Gaps & Opportunities

### Mender & Tender

What if there was a place for folks who have lost touch with family members to go -- where they had access to phones to call and supports to troubleshoot relational challenges, drawing from family systems therapy, etc.?

### Natural Highs

Brian is an adventure seeker, and looks for adrenaline rushes. What if there were retreats for folks in the throws of addiction to expose them to other kinds of 'natural' highs, and create some space to reflect on alternative sources of energy and out-of-body experiences?