



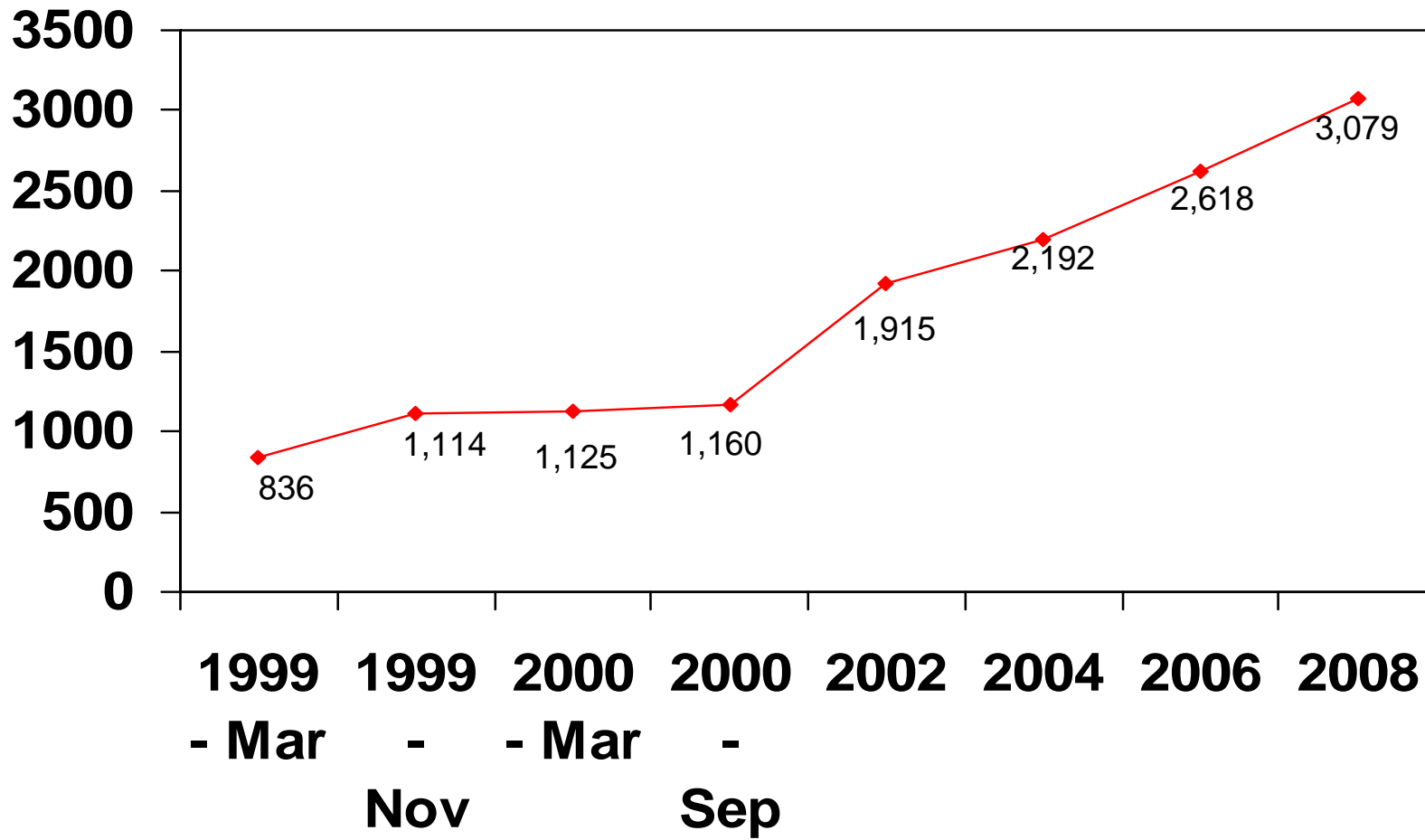
## **Presentation to Edmonton Police Commission**

January 24, 2013

*The Interplay of Homelessness, Mental Health & Addictions, and Crime*



## Total Number of Homeless by Count Date



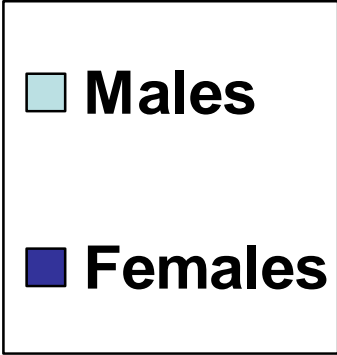
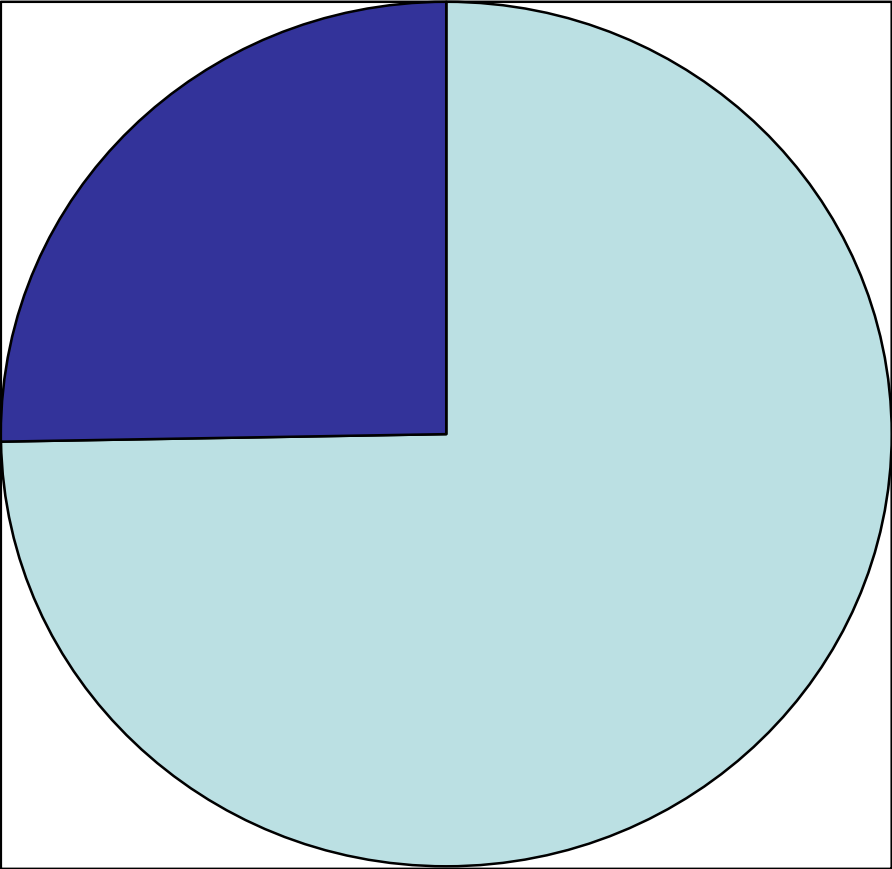


**80 % of Canadians who are homeless do NOT live on the street...they are hidden from view.**

- They live in cars
- They sleep in abandoned buildings/garages
- They sleep on somebody's couch
- They work and may have full-time jobs
- They are seniors on fixed incomes
- They include children

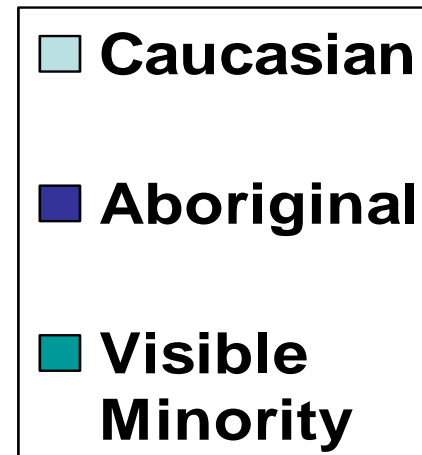
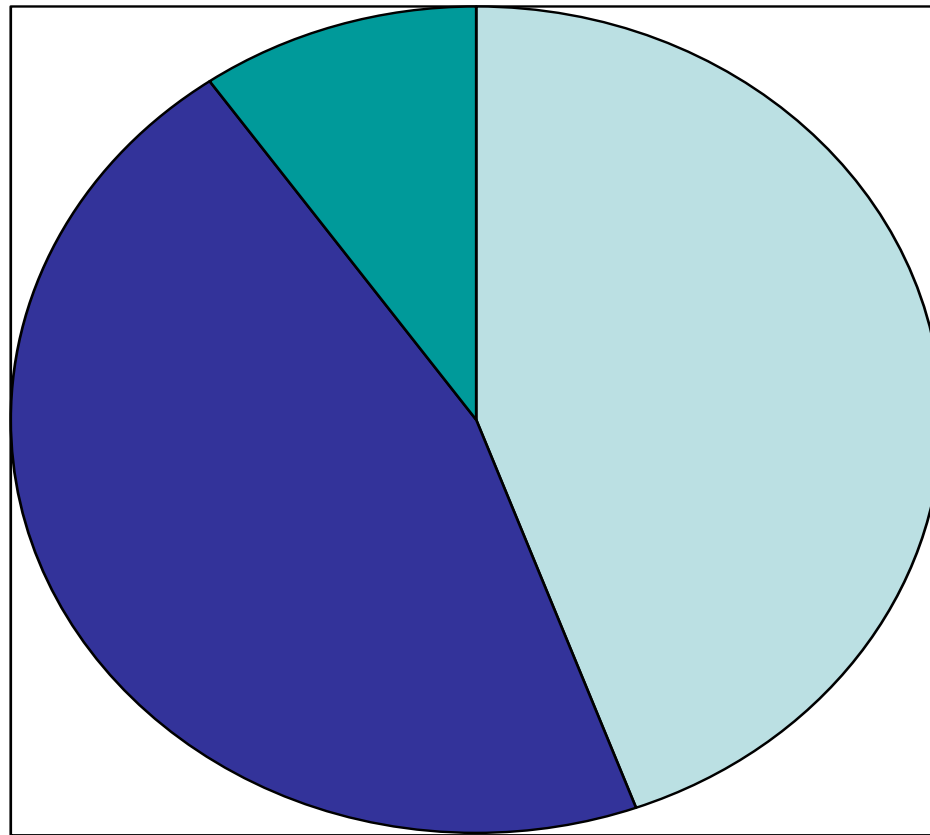


### Homeless by Gender (2012)





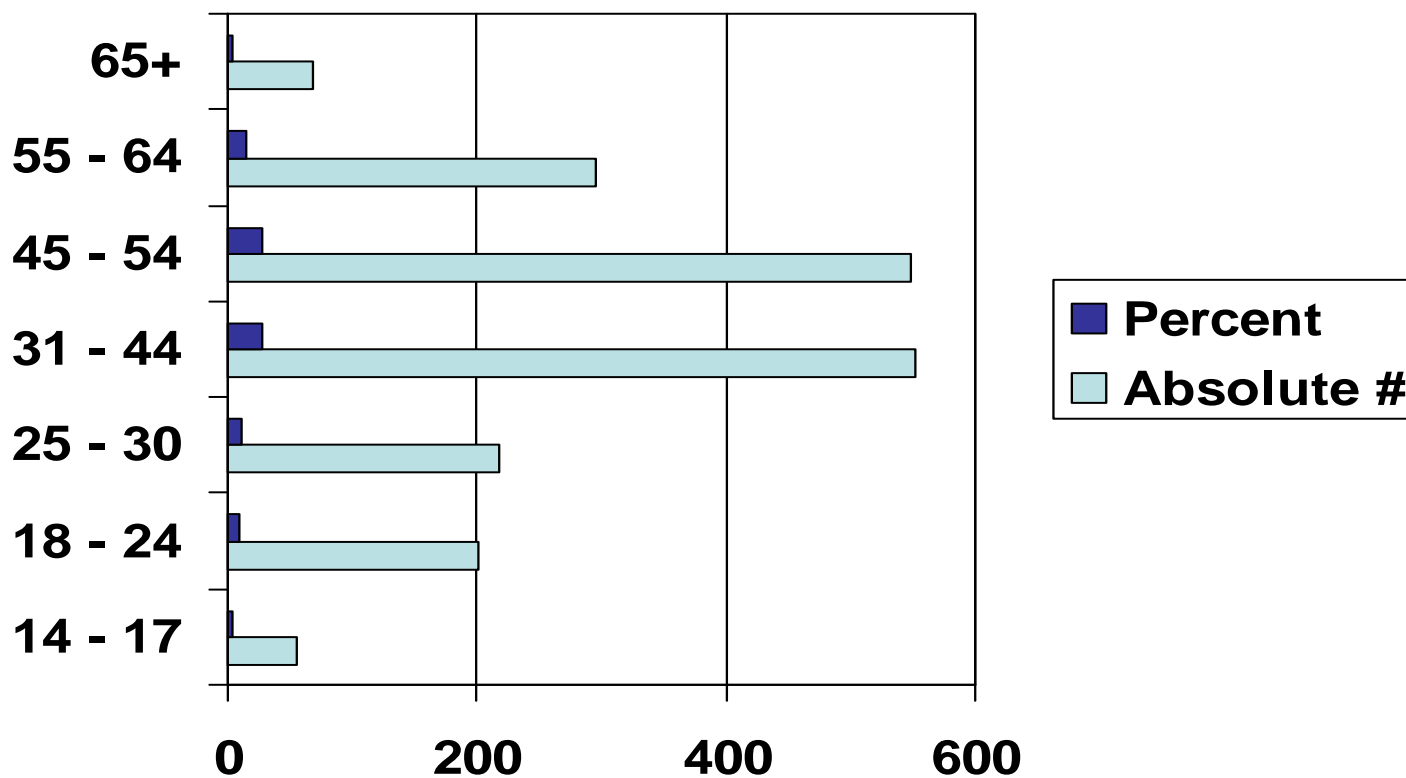
## Ethnicity of Homeless (2012)





## Age Distribution (2012)

Mean Age - 42





## **EMS**

### **Sheltered**

**41% used EMS in the past year. Frequency ranged from 1 – 20 times.**

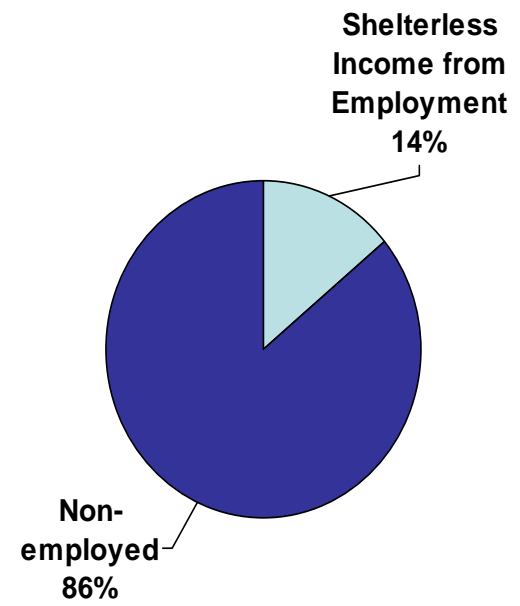
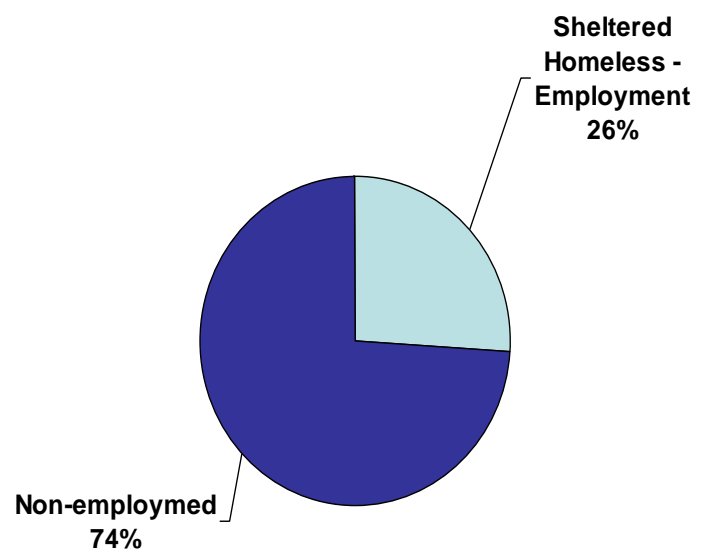
### **Shelterless**

**44% used EMS in the past year. Frequency ranged from 1 – 75 times.**



Edmonton Homeless Commission

## Employment







## **The Costs (\$) of Homelessness**

**A chronically homeless person costs taxpayers \$100,000 annually**

- 1 in 5 visits by EMS/Fire was to a homeless person
- A homeless person is 40X more likely to use an emergency room in severe weather than general population
- Average length of stay in hospital if homeless person hospitalized = 66 days (general population = 9.4 days)
- Top ten 'frequent flyers' to emergency room averaged 66 times/year
- One night accommodation in an emergency shelter = \$42.00 (Annual cost if homelessness grew at pre-2009 pace = \$54 million in 2018)



**Edmonton Homeless Commission**

	<b>Cost/Day (\$)</b>	<b>Min. Savings (\$) *</b>
<b>Housing without support services</b>	<b>25 - 35</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Housing with support services</b>	<b>67 - 88</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Emergency overnight shelter</b>	<b>60 - 80</b>	<b>20</b>
<hr/>		
<b>Detoxification centre</b>	<b>80 - 185</b>	
<b>Mental health facility</b>	<b>140 - 191</b>	
<b>Correctional facility</b>	<b>155 - 250</b>	
<b>Psychiatric hospital</b>	<b>380</b>	

**source: British Columbia Ministry of Community,  
Aboriginal & Women's Services**



## **Fiscal Costs of Homelessness\***

(per person per year)

**\$66,000 - \$120,000 – Institutional Responses** (prison, detention, and psychiatric hospitals)

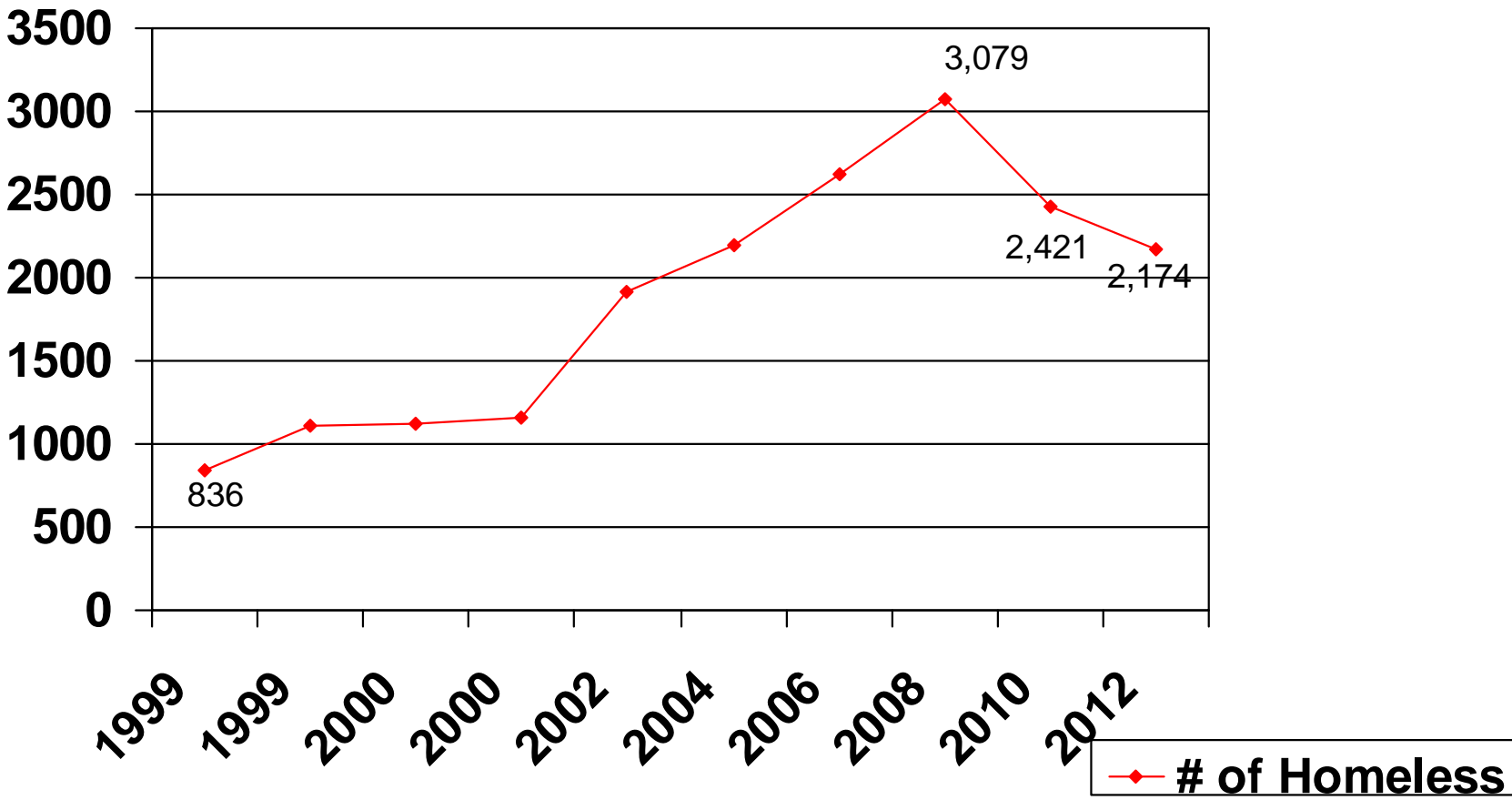
**\$13,000 - \$42,000 – Emergency Shelters** (facilities for men, women, family, youth and victims of violence)

**\$13,000 - \$18,000 – Supportive and Transitional Housing**

**\$5,000 - \$8,000 – Affordable Housing, No Supports**

\*The Cost of Homelessness: Analysis of Alternate Responses in Four Canadian Cities (Pomeroy, 2005)

# Edmonton Homeless Commission





## Cost Avoidance

### Pathways to Housing (68 people)

#### Emergency Room Visits

One year pre-admission	One year post-admission	Difference/Cost Avoidance
274 visits \$80,830.00	120 visits \$35,400.00	154 visits \$45,430.00

#### Days spent in Hospital

One year pre-admission	One year post-admission	Difference/Cost Avoidance
2186 inpatient days \$3,136,910.00	658 inpatient days \$944,239.00	1528 inpatient days \$2,192,680.00



## Mental Illness & Addictions

1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental  
Illness in their lifetime

Health Canada



## **Mental Illness & Addictions over represented in correctional Facilities**

- 80% of offenders in federal correctional facilities have substance abuse problem
- 32% of new intakes in B.C. federal penitentiaries had a current diagnosis of a mental disorder (12% serious mood or psychotic disorder).



## **Mental Illness & Addictions over represented amongst the homeless**

Based on in-depth interviews with **76 people that were homeless** or had been homeless more than once **in Edmonton, 59% of the homeless** are thought to **suffer from a mental illness. (2003 survey of the homeless in Edmonton)**

Overall **66% reported using drugs or alcohol** (Note: This doesn't speak to severity).

**73%** of respondents **indicated that alcohol and/or drug use played a role in them becoming homeless.**

**69%** indicated that they had **sought treatment** at some point in their life **for substance abuse.**





## **Homelessness, Victimization and Crime**

**Those without adequate shelter are more likely than the Housed to be victims of violence and, for women, victims of sexual assault:**

- **1992 Toronto Street Health report found that:**
  - 46% of women & 39% of men had been physically assaulted in previous year;
  - 43% of women & 14% of men sexually harassed in previous year;
  - 21% of study's women reported having been raped



## **Being homeless increases the odds of being jailed and being jailed increases the odds of being homeless:**

- **79%** of those surveyed in Edmonton (2003 homeless survey) indicated that they had spent time in jail.
- 30% of those incarcerated in Canada will have no home to go to upon release (Eberle et al, 2001)
- Novac (2006) reported that nearly 3,000 individuals entered Toronto shelters directly from prison.
- Former prisoners are more likely of spending more than one year in a shelter (Springer et al., 1998)
- Viteli (1993) found much higher rates of recidivism among people released from Custody without housing.
- A Corrections Canada survey indicated that 70% of inmates would not re-offend if properly housed upon release.



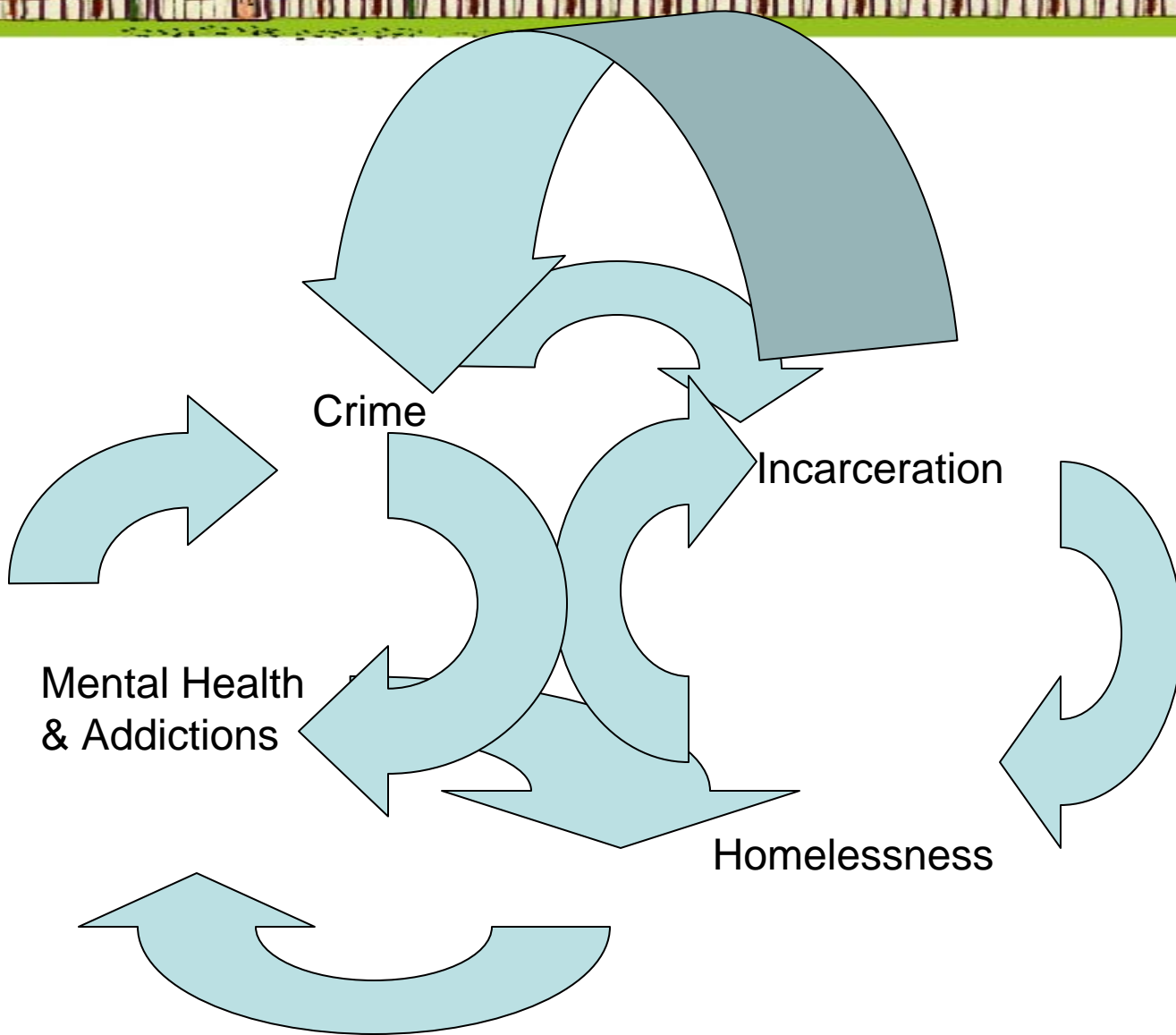
## **Victimization is often contributing factor for homelessness:**

- **37% of Calgary shelter users reported being sexually abused in childhood**
- **A Toronto study of 300 homeless persons found that 49% of women and 16% of men experienced childhood sexual abuse**
- **National study of youth homelessness found that 24% had experienced Some form of sexual, physical or emotional abuse at home. 68% had come from foster care, group homes or a youth centre.**



## **Homeless individuals more likely to engage in criminal activity, but more likely to be charged with property offences, drug offences & bylaw violations:**

- In Edmonton survey (2003) sentences of 30 days or less accounted for 45% of all offences
- EPS responded to 35,000 public disorder calls in 2012
- Homeless frequently charged with violations of municipal bylaws such as loitering, noise, & panhandling (Eberle et al, 2001)
- Homeless may occasionally commit minor crimes in order to obtain shelter (Eberle and Edmonton survey)
- Many homeless involved in purchasing/selling drugs, although they are unlikely to be major drug traffickers (Fischer, 1992). They may also engage in illegal activities to secure money for drugs





## Fiscal Cost

- In Canada (2002) **direct alcohol-related health care costs totalled more than \$3.3B** and **law enforcement costs** were estimated at **\$3.1B**.
- **In Edmonton (2010) one homeless person** with intensive complex needs, over one year resulted in **76 police calls** at a cost of **\$84,000**, **115 hospital visits**, and **72 hospital days** at a cost of **\$103,000**. **Total health & policing + \$187,000**.
- **Top 10 homeless frequent flyers cost health care system \$3.6 million. (CHA)**
- Of the **627 acute care mental health beds** in Edmonton, **113 or 18%**, are **occupied by people that are ready to be discharged, but there is no suitable housing**.



## **“Frequent Flyers – Health & Justice**

### **Scale**

The “Homeless with intensive needs” report estimated that there were 300-600 homeless with intensive needs

### **Attributes**

- Largely sleeping rough
- Multiple and intensive issues of mental illness, addictions, behavioural issues, cognitive problems etc.
- Frequent users of health, criminal justice and social services at huge cost
- Lack of suitable housing and supports for this clientele



## The Challenge

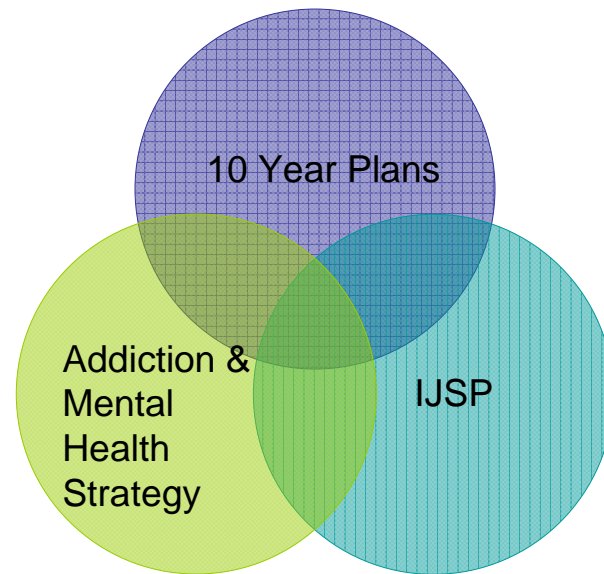
**“Our modern tendency to separate the pieces of public safety into basically separate parts – crime, mental health, social housing and development – it’s a failure and it will never work.”**

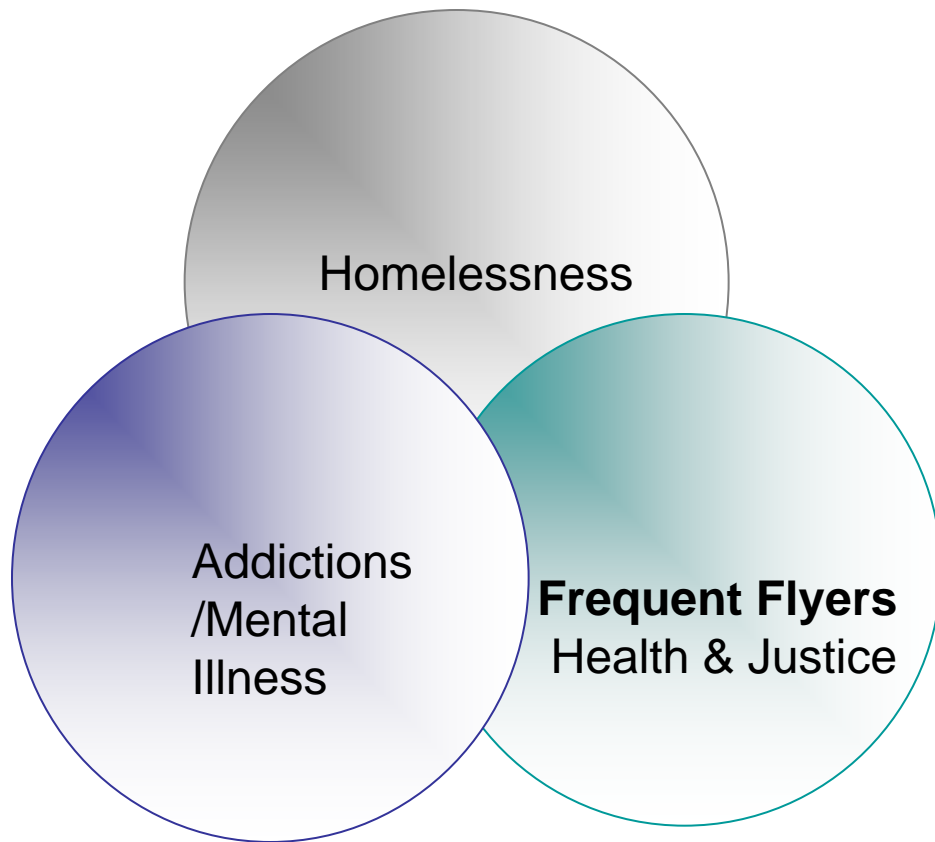
(Department of Criminology, University of Ottawa)





Looking at the same problem with different lenses







## The Opportunity

### Breaking the Cycle

- **Adequate housing is a fundamental determinant of health.** (Alberta's Addiction & Mental Health Strategy)
- **70% of inmates** indicate they are **less likely to re-offend if housed** upon release. (Corrections Canada)
- One policy alternative that is proven **effective in reducing chronic homelessness, as well as public health care costs, is permanent supportive housing.** (National Alliance to End Homelessness)
- PSH clients report a **higher quality of life, reduced consumption of substances & a significant reduction in the utilization of emergency & acute care health services.** (Various sources)



## DiverseCity

DiverseCity, one of our Housing First teams, calculated that the **'cost avoidance'** accrued by 40 clients over a one year period amounted to more than **\$1.5 million:**

- **Psychiatric hospital admissions<sup>1</sup> decreased from 1386 days to 95 days. (Cost Avoidance = \$678,201)**
- **Days incarcerated decreased from 3696 days to 294 days. (Cost Avoidance = \$844,520)**
- **Decrease in emergency room visits from 70 to 11. (Cost avoidance = 13,629)**



**Thank you.**

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