

**Current Housing Barriers in the City of Denver
For Transgender and Non-Binary Individuals
Experiencing Houselessness and Violence**

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PUAD 5361-E02 Capstone Seminar

April 28, 2023

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Executive Summary

This research project focuses on the housing barriers faced by transgender and non-binary (T/NB) individuals experiencing houselessness in Denver, Colorado. This study uses a qualitative research methodology, conducting in-depth interviews with nine individuals to learn more about their experiences with houselessness and their journey to obtain stable housing. This study provides critical insights into the experiences of T/NB individuals experiencing houselessness in Denver, Colorado, and contributes to the development of more effective and equitable housing policies and programs. The purpose of this study is to expand upon Housekeys Action Network Denver's (HAND) advocacy efforts and their 2022 survey. HAND conducted a Housing Street Outreach Survey in 2022 on the experiences of unhoused people in Denver, Colorado. The qualitative data in this study will serve as supportive evidence for the HAND survey findings while also serving as a comparison to the experiences of the general unhoused population in Denver.

This research examines the variety of barriers unhoused T/NB people face, such as a lack of affordable housing, discrimination, ongoing systematic and interpersonal violence, and stigmas against their gender identities. The participants in this research highlight how their traumas of being unhoused are exacerbated by the challenges of navigating case management, housing navigation, and shelter services. The study emphasizes the need for a more thorough and inclusive strategy to combat houselessness, emphasizing the need for Housing First solutions above short-term outlets such as emergency shelters. The Housing First model is an approach to housing that prioritizes connecting unhoused individuals and families to permanent housing with low barriers, i.e., no preconditions or barriers to housing such as sobriety, treatment, intense rules, or participation requirements (Cho et al., 2014).

The findings highlight the significance of abandoning the conventional case management and sheltering approach. The current lens through which houselessness is viewed places blame rather than emphasizing and understanding the fact that houselessness is a systemic problem.

Organizations, advocates, and policymakers must address and acknowledge the violence, shame, oppression, and prejudice that T/NB people experience to develop approaches to ending houselessness that are inclusive and equitable. It is essential to address the underlying causes of transphobia, discrimination, and violence while also working towards housing solutions that center a Housing First model.

This research serves as a stepping stone for further examination of the lives of T/NB people who are unhoused. In addressing houselessness and violence, organizations, advocates, and policymakers can reshape the ways in which we combat houselessness in Denver, or at the very least, begin to acknowledge the immense disparities that unhoused T/NB individuals face in working towards stable housing.

Introduction

This research project focuses on the housing barriers experienced by transgender and non-binary individuals who are experiencing houselessness in Denver, Colorado. The aim is to identify the specific challenges that these individuals face when working towards safe and secure housing and to explore potential solutions to address and combat these barriers. T/NB individuals disproportionately experience houselessness and violence nationwide (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016), and systemic oppression against them has resulted in a lack of equitable service delivery for those seeking housing stability (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016). This research builds upon the findings of HAND's 2022 Housing Street Outreach Survey, which documented the experiences of unhoused individuals in Denver, and

aims to provide supplemental information on the experiences of unhoused T/NB individuals experiencing houselessness and violence in Denver.

Current research indicates that T/NB individuals face significant barriers to accessing safe and affordable housing, including systemic discrimination, a lack of access to gender-affirming services, and a lack of inclusive housing options. These barriers can lead to an increased risk of houselessness and housing insecurity, violence, negative health outcomes, and decreased access to social services (Glick et al., 2016). This qualitative research uses in-depth interviews with T/NB individuals who face houselessness and violence in Denver, Colorado, to gain a better understanding of the barriers that they face. Although housing barriers can be broad, the in-depth interviews identify and narrow down larger themes around the barriers that these individuals are facing. Nine unhoused T/NB individuals participated in the study, where they shared their experiences with houselessness, systemic and interpersonal violence, shelters, case management, and services provided to them during their journey towards stable housing. The research found that T/NB individuals face negative experiences with case management and shelters, along with ongoing experiences of violence prior to and during their episodes of houselessness. Additionally, the study highlights the need to prioritize Housing First models, advocacy against violence, and de-stigmatization of gender identity, houselessness, and violence.

This study is a new contribution to the existing literature and theory on T/NB individuals experiencing houselessness, specific to Denver, Colorado. Although Denver has a number of houseless day and overnight shelters that are inclusive of T/NB individuals, they still operate within some of the confines of traditional models around case management, sheltering, and housing. The research results suggest that HAND must highlight a greater need for Housing First approaches specific to T/NB individuals over centering solutions in shelters. Additionally,

HAND can advocate for unhoused T/NB individuals with a lens that destigmatizes violence to push for greater conversations around violence prevention and the de-stigmatization of gender identity and houselessness in general.

Literature Review

Key Concepts and Terms

T/NB individuals face structural oppression that often leads them to disproportionately experience houselessness and violence (Glick et al., 2019). Facing discrimination from a young age, along with harassment and violence as a result of their identities, can be a common occurrence for T/NB individuals. These inequities can often start in the home, where individuals face rejection from their families, leaving them without the support system and community that one might typically need to fall back on (Seibel et al., 2018). Additionally, structural and systemic oppression, rejection, and othering in employment, academia, social services, medical care, and society contribute to disproportionate impacts on housing insecurity for T/NB individuals (Seibel et al., 2018).

Gender identity is defined as an individual's personal and internal sense of identifying with or without a particular gender (Wamsley, 2021). One might gravitate more towards being a man, woman, or a unique combination of the two. While others might not identify with any gender (Szuminski, 2020). "Transgender", often known as "trans", is a term used to describe individuals whose gender identity is different from the gender they were assigned at birth (NCTE, 2023). "Non-binary" is a term that describes individuals that do not fit within the binary of male and female (NCTE, 2023). Some may also label themselves as "gender-queer", "gender non-conforming", "two-spirit" or "agender". The distinction between "gender identity",

"gender", and "sex" is crucial to understand when exploring the experiences of T/NB individuals in this research. In this research paper, the term "non-binary" is used as an overarching term for individuals who identify outside of the traditional binary categories of male or female. If a participant identifies with a specific term, such as "genderqueer" or "two-spirit", that term will be used when referring to them in the paper. This is an effort to acknowledge the differences and complexities of gender identities and not assume that there is homogeneity in their experiences.

This research does not seek to or intend to minimize the differences among these populations but to explore their hardships outside of the typical challenges that are often labeled as ones under the LGBTQ identity. However, for the purposes of this research, there is an understanding that both T/NB identities challenge traditional Western hetero-patriarchal norms around the gender binary. These identities share various commonalities in their experiences, from the challenges that they face in the housing navigation process to their overall experiences with stigmatization and structural oppression (Office of the High Commissioner, n.d.). The fight for these terms is empowering because it can be associated with the fight for decolonization, freedom, and inclusivity (Abruzzo, 2022).

"Houseless" refers to a state of lacking a permanent or stable place of dwelling or shelter. Person-first language is used in this paper to dignify and humanize the participants; using the term "unhoused" brings focus to their identity rather than the condition they are facing (Slayton, 2021). By using the term "houseless" rather than "homeless," the focus shifts from individual blame to the broader societal and systemic barriers that prevent people from accessing safe and stable housing (Slayton, 2021). "Housing insecurity" will be used in this paper as an encompassing term that defines the challenges of safe and stable housing, which may include facing challenges of affordability, safety, quality, security, and loss of housing (Bucholtz, 2018).

The term 'barrier' is a socially defined disadvantage or obstacle related to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work, and age—often referred to as social determinants of health—that can contribute to decreased functioning or housing insecurity for T/NB individuals (CDC, 2020).

Housing Discrimination for T/NB Individuals

The purpose of exploring housing barriers specific to T/NB individuals is important due to their disproportionate oppression and discrimination within the U.S. housing process (James et al., 2016). The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) data shows that while only 5 percent of the general population identifies as transgender or non-binary, they make up an estimated 20–40 percent of the unhoused population (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2020). This disparity is due to the systemic oppression and discrimination that these individuals face, leading to a lack of access to safe and affordable housing, employment opportunities, and social services (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2020).

The National Center for Transgender Equality found that around 30 percent of transgender people have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives in a 2015 study (James et al., 2016). Additionally, higher rates of inequities were reported among respondents who are black (44 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native (41 percent), or multiracial (40 percent) (James et al., 2016). The survey also found that one in five (22 percent) respondents who had been homeless in the past year reported being turned away from a shelter because of their transgender or gender non-conforming identity (James et al., 2016). Furthermore, the number of unhoused transgender people in the United States increased by 88 percent between 2016 and 2019 (Mallory & Sears, 2016). Approximately half of the United States' LGBTQIA+

population live in states with laws that openly prohibit housing-based discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Mallory & Sears, 2016).

Structural Inequities and Oppression for T/NB Individuals

Considering the ongoing challenges that T/NB individuals face within our society and culture, these individuals have unique needs compared to the general population in getting their overall needs met (Beltran et al., 2019). These basic needs are often left unmet by service providers, housing navigators, shelter services, and case managers. Some simple changes to services can make the biggest difference for participants, this may include access to gender-neutral facilities, safe and respectful living environments that affirm gender identities, private living spaces that are not assigned based on gender, and medical and psychological services that are both sensitive and understanding of all gender identities (Beltran et al., 2019). Aside from accessibility and inclusivity in case management, many structural changes need to be made at the higher level of housing navigation, from the application all the way to the lease signing. Many T/NB individuals may not have identification documents that accurately reflect their gender; this can add an additional challenge to accessing housing and social services and often impede on the necessary steps to transition from houselessness into stability (Mottet, 2006).

Discrimination in employment, healthcare, academia, and policies disproportionately impacts underrepresented and oppressed communities such as transgender and non-binary individuals, particularly those that identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2020). Addressing these systemic issues requires a multifaceted approach that includes policy changes, increased funding for affordable housing, and efforts to combat discrimination and promote inclusion. T/NB BIPOC individuals face

inequities in housing-related services such as rental, credit and loan, and shelter support (Mottet, 2006).

Intersecting inequities can be understood through the concept of ‘intersectionality’ coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw defines intersectionality as "a theoretical framework for understanding how multiple forms of oppression, such as race and gender, intersect and create unique experiences of discrimination" (Crenshaw, 1989). Understanding and considering the intersections of multiple forms of oppression is critical to examining the experiences of underrepresented groups. The concept of intersectionality can be applied to the various intersections of one's identity, with considerations for race, gender, class, and sexuality (Crenshaw, 1989). As discussed, T/NB individuals face discrimination in housing due to their gender identity but also face additional forms of discrimination based on their race, ethnicity, and other identity markers. By understanding the theory of intersectionality, we can better understand the experiences of T/NB individuals and the barriers they face in accessing stability. Although housing can be defined as one aspect of T/NB experiences of discrimination, housing insecurity and instability are also associated with poor health outcomes, depression, a higher risk of HIV acquisition, and substance misuse (Beltran, 2019). Additionally, a large percentage of nonbinary adults report mental health concerns and challenges, with 41 percent reporting their health as poor or fair, 51 percent identifying symptoms consistent with mental illness, and 39 percent having attempted suicide (Meyer & Wilson, 2021).

Two studies on barriers to stable housing have guided this research: one in New Orleans, Louisiana, and one in San Francisco, California. The study specific to New Orleans (Glick et al., 2019) aimed to identify the factors of housing insecurity specific to this population. The study highlights how New Orleans faces unique forms of structural oppression with some of the United

States' highest rates of poverty, rising housing costs, and mass levels of gentrification. Along with these inequities, New Orleans also faces a deep-rooted history of racial segregation and inequity, disinvestment in public resources, unmaintained infrastructure, and environmental degradation (Glick et al., 2019).

Although New Orleans' history is deeply rooted in these elements of systemic oppression, these elements are applicable to other areas of the United States. All regions have unique needs and historical contexts, but the United States has varying intersections of racism, misogyny, transphobia, and economic oppression that make underrepresented populations vulnerable to the experiences of housing instability. The housing discrimination that T/NB individuals face can be compounded by their racial identities, furthering oppression for BIPOC individuals who identify as T/NB. Individuals with intersecting identities face heightened discrimination and housing barriers (Glick et al., 2019). In the New Orleans study, it was highlighted that transgender women faced intensified housing obstacles, which were compounded at the intersection of race (Glick et al., 2019).

In the San Francisco study, Beltran et al. (2019) found that over a third of the transgender women surveyed in the San Francisco Bay Area reported experiencing housing instability. Additionally, more than half of the transgender women surveyed reported racial and anti-transgender discrimination. The most reported item selected for discrimination was highlighted as their search for housing (Beltran et al., 2019). Glick et al. (2019) and Beltran et al. (2019) provide a snapshot of the barriers that transgender women, particularly those who are BIPOC, face in accessing safe and stable housing. The findings suggest that T/NB BIPOC populations are at a higher risk of experiencing discrimination, housing insecurity, and

victimization. This increases their vulnerability to homelessness, violence and overall hardship (Beltran et al., 2019).

Systemic and Interpersonal Violence Against T/NB Individuals

T/NB individuals disproportionately experience different levels of violence, from a societal level to a personal level. Violence and oppression keep T/NB individuals vulnerable to further housing oppression and ongoing discrimination. Intimate partner violence, often known as domestic violence, can be defined as physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, psychological aggression, or coercion by a current or former intimate partner. This type of violence often results in physical injury, long-term psychological damage, negative sexual or reproductive health outcomes, and homicide (Peitzmeier et al., 2020). Forty-seven percent of transgender people have experienced sexual violence, compared to 25 percent of the general population; nearly half of the 47 percent of respondents specifically identified being physically attacked due to their gender identity or expression; and nearly one in five (22 percent) respondents reported being evicted from their housing due to their gender identity or expression (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016).

The United States Transgender Survey found that over half of survey participants had experienced some form of violence (James et al., 2016). The survey was conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) using a mixed-methods approach to gather robust data. Surveys were self-administered both online and in physical paper form, utilizing community-based organizations and community events, as well as reaching those with access to the internet to increase accessibility (Lambda Legal, 2016). The survey reached over 27,000 transgender individuals in the United States (Lambda Legal, 2016). It is an ongoing and common experience for transgender individuals to experience violence in their lifetimes. Within the

survey, 35 percent had experienced physical violence (i.e., hitting, slapping, or pushing), with 24 percent experiencing extreme physical violence (i.e., beating, burning, or hurt by a weapon), while 19 percent experienced a form of sexual violence (James et al., 2016).

The National Coalition for Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) released a report on their multi-method data collection approach in 2015 on hate violence and speech against LGBTQ and HIV-impacted individuals (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2015). The report surveyed over 2,000 individuals, highlighting the disproportionate rates of police violence experienced by non-white transgender individuals compared to white cisgender individuals. The report found that non-white transgender individuals are 2.4 times more likely to experience violence by police than white cisgender individuals. Additionally, transgender women are particularly vulnerable to police violence, being 2.9 times more likely to experience it than the general population (National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2015). This is a result of systemic discrimination and oppression transgender individuals face, along with exacerbated issues of race, which make transgender BIPOC individuals even more vulnerable to violence and abuse by law enforcement (Stenerson, 2022).

When T/NB individuals experience interpersonal and intimate instances of violence, they are often left feeling fearful of reporting and unlikely to interact with any aspects of the law due to valid fears for their safety. This leaves them unable to seek justice or protection when they need it (Stenerson, 2022). Stenerson (2022) found that 40.3 percent of transgender and gender diverse individuals interacted with police in the past year. Of those interactions, 45.7 percent reported having experienced at least one incident of verbal harassment by police, and 6.1 percent reported physical harassment from police in the past year (Stenerson, 2022). Engaging in sex work was a consistent determinant of police violence for T/NB individuals interacting with

police (Stenerson, 2022). Sex work is a common alternative method of survival for T/NB individuals who are historically discriminated against in the workplace and are stuck within cycles of poverty, abuse, and houselessness.

Case Management, Social Services, and Shelter Discrimination Against T/NB Individuals

T/NB individuals face immense challenges and barriers when it comes to accessing shelter systems intended to serve houseless individuals in the United States (Center for American Progress, 2016). The majority of shelter systems are designed around the gender binary, which can create significant problems for those that do not identify with their assigned biological sex (Mottet, 2006).

Most shelters are segregated based on sex, defined by one's biology and anatomy, which can make it difficult for transgender individuals to find a safe and supportive place to stay (Mottet, 2006). This segregated system, within a congregate shelter system, can leave many T/NB individuals feeling uncomfortable in either a men's or women's shelter. It also leaves them at risk for harassment and violence (Mottet, 2006). As a result, many transgender individuals are forced to choose between unsafe living situations or sleeping outside.

T/NB individuals are twice as likely to experience houselessness compared to the general population. Within this demographic, 20 percent report that their houselessness is directly connected to their gender identities (Kattari et al., 2017). This disproportionate impact leaves T/NB individuals exposed to increased violence and negative physical and mental health outcomes. Evidence shows that individuals who choose to access inequitable shelter systems are discriminated against, placed in physically unsafe environments, and are not given the privacy they need to feel protected (Kattari et al, 2017). This limits T/NB individuals' accessibility to the

necessary services needed to obtain housing, such as state housing assessments that determine eligibility for housing vouchers or affordable housing units.

In short, T/NB individuals experience discrimination based on gender identity in all areas of housing, sheltering, and case management. They also experience higher levels of interpersonal and systemic violence. This leaves them vulnerable to houselessness and increased violence. Interviewing T/NB individuals experiencing houselessness in Denver, Colorado will give us the guidance to support and inform better policies around solutions to houselessness. Additionally, understanding the connectedness of their experiences with houselessness and violence will inform us that solutions to these problems must be met with an understanding of both.

Methodology

Qualitative research is an effective approach to understanding sensitive topics such as houselessness, experiences of violence, discrimination, and journeys stability. Building relationships and fostering trust are essential when working with unhoused individuals, as it shows them there is value in their experiences and that listeners are empathetic.

In this research, a qualitative approach provides a more comprehensive examination of the barriers faced by the T/NB community as compared to a quantitative approach, which may only provide a snapshot of the issue.

Research Question and Proposition

The purpose of this qualitative research project is to explore the housing barriers faced by T/NB individuals experiencing houselessness in Denver, Colorado. The research aims to identify the specific challenges that these individuals face in accessing safe and secure housing and to explore potential solutions to address and combat these barriers. This research was conducted

through in-depth interviews with members of the T/NB community in Denver, Colorado. The research explores the barriers faced by T/NB individuals with an acknowledgement of an overall lack of existing social housing or affordable housing that could immediately get everyone off the streets and into stability.

Sampling Strategy and Data Collection

This qualitative research project conducted in-depth and confidential interviews with T/NB individuals experiencing houselessness and violence in Denver. These interviews were designed to elicit detailed descriptions of participants' experiences of navigating the system to obtain safe and secure housing, with the hope of gaining a better understanding of the barriers that they face in their housing navigation process while unhoused. Participants were selected at shelters that specifically served T/NB individuals, at encampments, and within the homes of previously unhoused individuals.

A purposive sampling approach was chosen for the methodology, as the researcher chose study participants based on specific criteria: being currently or recently unhoused in Denver and identifying as transgender and/or non-binary. This sampling approach is more useful for the needs of HAND, as it guarantees that participants in the study are specific to the targeted population. This approach provides a deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants since they are chosen based on their identities. Furthermore, this approach fits the project's time constraints and limited resources. The criteria for 'unhoused' was defined as currently unhoused or unhoused within the last five years, in order for the research to be in line with HAND's current data and criteria for 'unhoused'.

Interviewees were solicited at a variety of unhoused service organizations that specifically welcome T/NB individuals, such as Colorado Village Collaborative's tiny home

villages, Urban Peak Drop-In Center, The Delores Project, and the Gathering Place. Additionally, unhoused participants at the HAND meetings were invited to participate. Participants were advised that the interview would take between 30 minutes and an hour. During the interview, the participants were notified of a confidentiality and voluntary participation statement. Additionally, they were asked about their race, gender identity, sexuality, disability status, and veteran status. These demographic questions were in line with what HAND asked participants during their Housing Outreach Survey; however, 'two-spirit' was added to the gender identity list for inclusivity purposes.

Interviewees were given the option of meeting virtually or meeting where they were staying (either at a campsite, parking area, or shelter). If participants needed more privacy, they were given the option of transportation to a more private location, such as a library, a private office in partner organizations, or a nearby coffee shop. The interviewer working with participants had experience working with unhoused and underrepresented populations. Participants were given a \$25 Visa gift card after conducting the interviews.

The interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in the stories and experiences of the interviewees. A thematic analysis entails coding and categorizing data, identifying themes, or understanding patterns in the data to deliver a cohesive narrative (Braun, 2006). The primary goal of this qualitative research project was to identify specific themes that T/NB individuals experiencing houselessness and violence face in Denver. These themes were categorized to build upon current research conducted by HAND, which will also serve as a comparison to understand the differences between the general unhoused population and the T/NB unhoused population in Denver.

Analysis: Compiling, Disassembling, and Reassembling Data

Once interviews were conducted, each individual story was analyzed and interpreted into qualitative data. To better categorize and break down the stories of individuals, a program called ‘Quirkos’ was used. Quirkos is qualitative data software that uses transcription and text data to identify themes of analysis. In Quirkos, transcription can be pasted into the program, and the user is able to highlight quotes or notes from the interview that can be categorized into specific themes that stand out. Each interview had unique storytelling and communication methods, and after dissecting each of the nine interviews, a variety of themes and categories were identified.

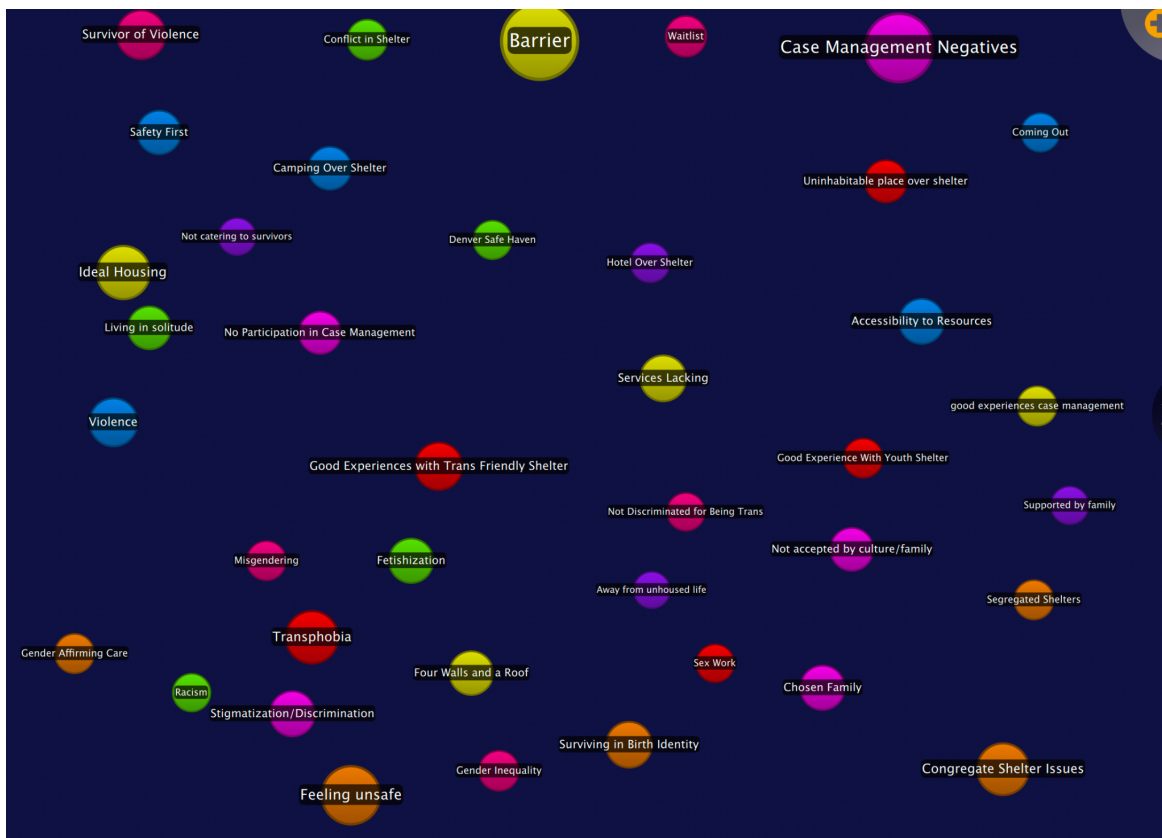


Figure A. Screenshot from ‘Quirkos’ data collection application for qualitative studies.

Figure A shows a screenshot of the original, unfiltered, and unrevised categories that were originally identified in Quirkos. Quotes from interviews were assigned to each category. To

narrow the stories and themes down, each quote was assigned to the larger themes identified in the results below. Quirkos was helpful in helping identify broader categories to identify larger themes.

Results

Participant Data

Table 1. Participant Demographic Data.

Characteristic	Description	Frequency
Age		
	18-25	44%
	26-54	44%
	55+	11%
Chronic Illness		
	Yes	56%
	No	44%
Disability		
	Mental Disability	67%
	Physical Disability	44%
	No Disability	33%
Gender		
	Transgender	56%
	Woman	44%
	Man	11%
	Genderless	11%
	Non-Binary	33%
	Agender	11%
Pronouns		
	They/Them	56%
	She/Her	67%

Characteristic	Description	Frequency
	He/Him	22%
Race and Ethnicity		
	Black	33%
	Hispanic/Latinx	33%
	Pacific Islander	11%
	Other	22%
	White	44%
Survivor of Violence		
	Yes	89%
	No	11%

It is important to note that the self-reported data on participant demographics reflects the complexities of identity and the limitations of quantifying one's experiences. For the purposes of the validity of the research, none of the participants were cisgender and all fell under the "transgender" or "non-binary" umbrella; however, self-reporting allows them to choose one or multiple gender identities that they identify with. Therefore, someone choosing "woman" could either mean a transgender woman or even identify as a non-binary femme that has not identified or designated a specific gender label.

This research understands that individuals can identify outside of the gender binary as both "transgender" and "non-binary" while also identifying with various gender identities and pronouns. This is why participants were allowed to choose the terms they identified with and were not limited to a few responses. The data collected on pronoun usage and gender identity acknowledges the fluidity and complexities of these experiences, and the participants' choices were respected in the data collection process. It is also important to note that participants were able to choose multiple races and ethnicities, with only one participant identifying as "white" alone and many identifying with more than one race.

Table 2. Participants Place of Residence During Period of Houselessness.

Participants Place of Residence During Period of Houselessness			
Combination of Encampment and Emergency Shelter	Covid-19 Respite Motel for High Risk Individuals	Vehicle	Emergency Shelter
3	1	1	4

Along with street outreach, fliers were posted to shelters that serve individuals who are T/NB to gather participants for interviews. Five individuals reached out based on the information provided on the flier (Appendix D), but only four of those were interviewed. One had reached out after the interview process in the research was completed, but it was too late to conduct it. The rest of the interviews were done outside, or in the homes of the individuals who were recently housed. Two interviews were done over the phone, and the participants were awarded the gift cards at their convenience.

Barrier 1: Case Management – Case Management is the Gatekeeper to Housing Stability, but The Case Management Models Aren't Even Working!

When asked about barriers to case management, interviewees explained a lack of knowledge about the case management process, even though it is not only important but essential to housing stability. Case managers have access to a statewide, federally funded program called the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), where housing assessments that are essential to being placed on housing waitlists, such as the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool), can be accessed. The VI-SPDAT is a deep-dive survey that determines the risk and prioritization of individuals and families. One participant who has been unhoused since their early teenage years highlighted: *"I was 14 years*

old. I never even knew how to do basic things for myself, like where to start, and no one helped me with that." During the interviews, 100 percent of participants did not initially get housing assistance or case management for the following reasons:

- They were never assigned a case manager at their shelter.
- They did not know case management is often a prerequisite to housing stability.
- They did not know it was a necessity or an aspect of navigating houselessness, not even knowing or being told what it was.
- They relied on themselves and assumed they needed to navigate future housing opportunities on their own.
- Their case managers did not address their housing needs in the short meetings they had with them.
- They could not successfully complete meetings with case managers who were hard to work with because they did not care about their jobs, were overworked, or were discriminatory.

Another participant who also shared becoming unhoused at the age of 14 specifically stated that their age was a barrier to them receiving case management. They shared that they began accessing case management when they were 16 years old because they were not allowed to access services at 14. Urban Peak, Denver's youth shelter, currently specifies on their website that they serve youth between the ages of 15 and 24. Many T/NB youth face houselessness at a young age. This excludes young individuals facing houselessness and leaves them on their own as one of the most vulnerable populations.

Once many participants figured out that case management was needed to find stable housing, they sought it out. Although sheltering is not a requirement for case management (there

are many agencies that provide case management without shelter, such as Urban Peak, the Gathering Place, the Colorado Health Network, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, WellPower, and many more) many participants highlighted that they faced extreme difficulties in accessing their case managers once they decided where to go for case management: *"I had to fight to get a case manager."* They highlighted difficulties in having enough time to address their needs with case managers. There was a feeling that many of the tasks required took a long time and could not be addressed for one hour every two weeks or every month. Additionally, choosing a time to meet with case management was a difficulty for participants. One stated, *"I'm not meeting with them enough, and I have to chase them down"*. Another participant who lived in their vehicle stated that they waited between 2 and 3 years for a case manager, despite the staff they interacted with knowing the participant had been unhoused the entire time they were accessing care.

Participants stated that the infrequency and inconsistency of meeting with case managers was a setback to their progress. It was difficult for participants to only meet with case managers once a month or once every two weeks for an hour each time. They felt that the time would pass and they would barely achieve any of the goals on their to-do list. 44 percent of participants stated that they felt it was hard to get work done with case managers once they were assigned one. These difficulties revolved around the following:

1. Discrimination, racism, and stigmatization

"We need people that are more open and understanding, no matter someone's race, age, sexuality, or gender. Because we all have a life, we all have a story. We're homeless and have nowhere else to go and need that one person we can rely on. If that person can't help us, where do we go? I've had to fight so many different case managers and humans last year just to get off

the streets... They keep hiring people that aren't educated. They don't understand youth or youth with problems.”

2. Transphobia and misgendering

“During my intake process at (agency), my case manager wrote up my treatment plan or the goal plan. And the whole thing was, you know, ‘she’ and ‘her’. And so she was like, ‘do you have any changes for it?’ And I was like, well, that's hard. Like a lot of times it's hard to speak up. But I've been trying to get better at it because I have to, so that other people can feel able to, so I was like, “I'm non-binary and I use a third person neutral pronoun- they.” And so she was like “oh, I actually knew that”. And then she went through and was working on it without correcting the use of ‘she’ ... I did just have to sit there and smile and nod.”

3. Lack of training in gender affirming care

“They were overworked, so it was hard to get ahold of them. And it's especially hard to have a case manager that could even help me with any of my gender-related needs. I had to do all my gender affirming stuff by myself. Even though I have a Case Manager through (agency), I still had to set up all of my own appointments because they just don't even have the time to help you with that stuff... Something I've noticed is that nobody is trained in gender-related stuff. Even my case manager from (agency), she doesn't know very much about gender.”

4. Not addressing housing needs immediately

“I had a lot of barriers because I did not have the right resources handed to me when I was first out there. I knew about (agency) and stuff. I had a case manager, but my case manager was not working with me, and they just weren't doing what they needed to, and they set me back a little ...They should have filled out the housing application with me, like right then and there. They should have shown me resources that would've helped.”

5. Not having enough time and pay to address needs

“There's just not enough time for them to help me. I've been here (agency) for a year, and it took me four months to get a case manager here when I first got here...this is my first time being homeless. This is the only shelter I've been at. Knowing how radical and politically aware I am, I took for granted thinking people took care of shelters.”

The participants in Denver, Colorado, reflect a larger challenge nationwide. These individuals are being left without the support they need to exit homelessness, leaving them vulnerable to ongoing housing instability, violence, discrimination, and negative health outcomes (Cochran, Stewart, Ginzler, Cauce, & Rhodes, 2002). Many of the participants address the inaccessibility of case management due to staffing issues, poor staff morale, a lack of training, and ongoing concerns about their unavailability to meet. These concerns leave participants feeling an overall lack of support, along with the challenge of navigating unknown systems. Participants often share deep and personal information to later find out that their case manager moved on to a new job or quit due to high turnover. Not only can this be gut-wrenching, but it leads to increased levels of stress and trauma and decreased trust in the systems offered to navigate case management (Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2001).

Participants highlighted an overall lack of education and specifically "ignorant" interactions they had with case managers, who demonstrate an inability to model correct pronoun use in places meant to demonstrate "trauma-informed care" and service delivery. Modeling correct pronoun use can be a life-saving and affirming practice, especially for T/NB individuals, for whom case managers are ill-equipped to serve within a system without options for social housing, affordable housing, or subsidized housing. The resources are currently lacking for case

management to even be effective, and participants highlighted a greater need for training and support in gender, race, and sexuality for case managers.

Barrier 2: Shelters – Navigating the Perpetual Cycles of Houselessness - They Can't Be in the Shelter, They Can't Sleep Outside, and Case Management Isn't Working. Where Should They Go?

In these interviews, participants shared their experiences with shelters and the variety of challenges they faced in accessing them. 67 percent of participants highlighted witnessing, being involved in, or stopping fights and conflicts in shelters. Additionally, 44 percent of participants specified that shelter staff allowed other shelter residents to discriminate based on identity without repercussions or accountability. Furthermore, 22 percent of participants specifically stated that their case managers in the shelters were racist towards them, which discouraged them from participating in case management and staying at the shelter.

Participants described shelters as jail-like environments where they were required to sleep through the night and were not allowed to stay if their sleep schedules differed from others. This situation led many participants to choose sleeping outside, in their cars, or moving between various shelters to find the right fit instead. 55 percent of participants chose to leave shelters due to various experiences related to shelter rules and policies. When seeking alternatives, the "better" shelters had very specific policies around obtaining a bed (where one could only call at a specific time and would only be let in if a bed was available, making the wait sometimes over a week for those who could call consistently). One participant highlighted that it took them 18 days to secure a bed.

Gender-segregated bathroom access can also be extremely uncomfortable and traumatic for individuals who do not identify with their biological sex, and private bathrooms are rarely an

option. This lack of privacy and inclusivity in shelters can lead to increased stress and trauma for T/NB individuals, forcing them to either leave or face increased discrimination in the bathrooms they choose to access (whether they choose to use the bathroom aligned with their identity or biological sex, both options have repercussions).

Participants typically mentioned feeling unsafe in congregate shelter environments, specifically citing ongoing conflicts and fights, smelling the use of substances such as crack near their beds, and feeling vulnerable to their belongings being stolen at any moment. A participant also expressed feeling unsafe due to the religious affiliations of many shelters. Although these shelters are legally required to serve all individuals regardless of their identity, the participants felt unwelcome because of the way they were treated. The interviews highlight a greater need for our systems to consider the emotional and psychological safety of T/NB unhoused individuals.

When participants were asked about their ideal housing situation, the results showed that basic needs were at the forefront of their minds. 44 percent of participants liked the idea of community living, with an emphasis on having their own door to lock and their own restroom. This preference highlights the value placed on autonomy, even within a community living setting. On the other hand, 44 percent of participants emphasized wanting complete solitude without the pressure to interact with others or worry about their impact on others. The remaining participant was open to a community living environment but also valued being alone.

Despite these differing preferences, 100 percent of participants expressed having their own living space without the constraints of shelters as their ultimate goal. Overall, the participants' ideal housing situation reflected a desire for safety and autonomy, with basic needs such as four walls and a roof being the primary concern.

Barrier 3: Violence and Stigma – If You Keep Perpetuating Stigma, You're Leaving Survivors (or Victims) of Violence on the Backburner Without Housing!

Many participants seemed to have an awareness of the safety concerns of being T/NB while living on the streets. 55 percent of participants unprompted brought up their fears of being murdered, having a target on their backs, facing verbal and physical harassment, and being overall fearful of living as their authentic selves. One participant said, *"A lot of people, I'm pretty certain, would not mind if society called for our executions of us. They would be glad for it."*

This information stands out as it shows how common and pervasive the fears are for T/NB individuals facing houselessness. According to the Human Rights Campaign (2021), the murders of transgender individuals in the United States are an ongoing crisis that has grown in the last two years. In 2021, at least 44 transgender or gender non-conforming people were fatally shot or killed by other violent means. This number represents a 150 percent increase from 2020. The majority of murders of black and Latinx transgender women. This report emphasizes what is known: that T/NB individuals, even more so women who are black and brown, face heightened discrimination and violence. One participant who expressed awareness around systemic and interpersonal violence towards T/NB individuals stated: *"When they find out I'm trans, they seem to take advantage of it. There are murders every year because of it."* In the interviews, 55 percent of participants said they felt unsafe at either shelters, and 44 percent of participants had experienced police violence.

During one of the interviews, a participant showed a recording on their phone of a violent police incident that occurred to them and a group of black people within the week of the interview. In the video, the participant and others around them were pepper-sprayed by the Denver Police Department. The next day, I found out that the next interview participant I was

interviewing was also involved in that video. 22 percent of participants had experienced police violence within the week they were interviewed. Additionally, 44 percent of participants reported experiencing fetishization and tokenization for being T/NB.

For some participants it was difficult to define their experiences of abuse; one participant stated, *"I probably should call it abuse, but I guess I'm more inclined to say that these were adults with power issues."* The stigmatization, shame, and guilt that comes with enduring violence are highlighted throughout different responses in the interviews:

- *"I never felt right about taking resources for being abused"* (when asked if they were offered resources for their experiences of violence).
- *"It's embarrassing; I should have never let it happen"* (in response to me asking if they had ever endured violence or considered themselves to be a survivor).
- *"Don't rock the boat."* (they were told by a family member after disclosing a violent assault had happened to them).

During the interviews, 33 percent of participants said they were offered resources for interpersonal violence, such as shelter services specific to domestic violence and the Rose Andom Center, which is a non-profit that offers support to domestic violence survivors. None of the participants specifically mentioned safety planning. These three participants did not highlight a specific acknowledgment of needing violence-specific resources. One stated they have difficulty receiving help around the topic; the other two mentioned that they persisted in relying on themselves for safety. Two participants specifically stated having negative experiences or associations with therapy.

55 percent of participants expressed varying degrees of contentious relationships with biological family members. One participant expressed fleeing physical danger from their family

due to their gender identity, stating, *"I don't have a family. They're actually really dangerous to me."* 44 percent of participants had expressed initial conflict, a lack of acceptance, and rejection from family members due to their gender identity. 44 percent of the participants who reported contentious relationships with biological family members seemed to place a strong value on the connectedness and trust they share with their chosen families.

Participants raised various concerns about facing incidents of violence in both systemic and interpersonal ways. A participant reflected on a time that shaped their concerns and fears around reporting incidents of violence and interacting with the police. During an instance of domestic abuse, they felt compelled to ask law enforcement for assistance (particularly out of fear of their partner hurting themselves), but law enforcement involvement escalated the situation, resulting in the arrest of their partner, which was not what the participant had wanted or intended. Additionally, when brought into custody, the participant who called the police was assumed to be female. When the participant expressed concern for their partner being arrested, explaining that it was a mistake and not what the participant wanted when calling police, the domestic violence advocate responded with, *"That's what they all say."*

Participants also specifically mentioned experiencing fear and violence at encampments and shelters. Three respondents spoke of a preference for living in encampments over shelters due to an increased sense of control over their environment and overall well-being. Encampments can also facilitate a family-like environment, where individuals can choose to stay around others that they trust and consider to be family. However, all three expressed particular incidents of increased violence that caused further traumatization and fear of living in unstable environments. One participant shared, *"I've been homeless on and off my entire life. This last time was the first time I was homeless alone by myself without any family. I had to make my own*

family...I feel like I survived last year, but at the same time, I'm still trying to get through all the trauma that last year has caused me because it still affects me now. I have a lot of emotions, and they hit hard. And after everything that happened last year, it definitely doesn't just go away."

Another stated, *"I've definitely been jumped for being queer a few times."*

Participants shared how gender inequities shaped many of their experiences with violence; one shared, *"A lot of folks who are raised as girls are brought up to be abused almost. Like groomed. Domestic labor, for example, that you should always be in a position to give to someone and also work for them. I spent a lot of my life since, probably since like age 12 or 13, trying to be a good girlfriend or figuring out how to erode my sense of self in service of somebody else. And so, you know, I have been stuck... with me being reliant on a man to have even a semblance of stability."*

This participant shared that they have stayed in relationships that were emotionally abusive or manipulative in order to stay housed and not risk living on the streets. In these examples, they shared that their abusive partners had even acknowledged that they needed them to survive, recalling them saying, *"You need me; you need my money."* At some point, they were fed up with the idea of relying on someone for survival and are finally living on their own for the first time ever in their car. Despite navigating houselessness, it was incredibly inspiring to watch them appear both optimistic and empowered. This participant touched on unlearning these rigid gender roles and feeling empowered to live within their identity. They continued to explain that a large barrier to housing for them is the expectation to work within the confines of a full-time, traditional forty-hour work week. Due to their disability, this was not a realistic expectation for them. *"I would say that a large part of the obstacle to housing is the requirement to have regular income and regular work, and that the work that is done in your community does not translate*

into income. You can work 40 hours a week taking care of the disabled people in your community or cleaning up the street, but unless you're employed, you have to have another job."

Discussion

Centering Housing First Models Over Shelters

The findings from participants highlight a greater need for systemic change. Addressing the core inequities around stigma, violence, and shame, along with reforming the ways we approach housing with a Housing First approach, could work towards dismantling the inequities that T/NB individuals face. The Housing First model can address the dire need for housing to fulfill the needs of those living on the streets while also still offering the option of supportive services (as voluntary) to ensure longevity in housing stability.

The Housing First model can be seen as an approach that challenges the idea that individuals or families experiencing houselessness should "earn" their way into permanent or supportive housing (Cho et al., 2014). The Housing First model centers housing as a human right and prioritizes the reduction of barriers to housing. The current model in Denver, which essentially forces unhoused individuals to participate in case management services that are harmful, inequitable, and emotionally and psychologically draining, does not seem to be working for unhoused individuals. If people are experiencing houselessness, it's clear that they need housing. Many of the approaches to current case management models make individuals feel that they have to solve all of their problems—i.e., go to therapy, get a job, go to the doctor, and everything else—before getting housing.

The reality is that most people need housing to accomplish all of their other goals. The inconsistencies and instabilities in shelters result in a longer to-do list for individuals, hindering

their ability to actually accomplish their goals. This causes further psychological harm and damage. One participant stated that they likely would have transitioned sooner if they were housed but put it off because they felt unsafe doing so. They also felt it would cause more barriers to their access to shelter programs. An inclusive Housing First Model prioritizes harm reduction and person-centered approaches that place the needs of people first.

The Housing First model can prioritize the idea that housing should be safe and affordable for everyone, giving everyone the ability to have access to housing. This model is proven to be the most effective for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness, with positive outcomes around long-term housing stability, improved behavior and physical health, and a reduction in the use of crisis services (Cho et al., 2014).

Centering The Fight Against Violence

Prior to conducting the interviews, the term "survivor" was used throughout the paper. However, after conducting the interviews, there is a need to acknowledge the debate and differences in preference for the use of the word "survivor" versus "victim". For some, the word "survivor" can be a term that empowers individuals who have endured violence. However, for some the term "victim" acknowledges that the violence was not something that was ever welcomed, asked for, or anticipated, and recognizes that it was not deserved. It can also focus on systemic failures that allow the continued perpetuation of violence (Williamson, 2018). Williamson's article acknowledges that some prefer to use neither term, and their views on self-label preferences are a completely personal preference in an effort to destigmatize discussions of violence. For the purpose of consistency within this research paper, the term "survivor" will continue to be used with an acknowledgement that it does not fit every

individual's experience. However, the term "victim" or any other preferred label will be used for individuals referenced that specifically highlight the preference of that term over "survivor".

The findings in the interviews highlight how the ongoing perpetuation of stigma and violence towards T/NB individuals who are survivors of violence is a major contributor to their ongoing oppression and continued victimization, which was not hypothesized at the beginning of the research paper. There is a greater need for advocacy that is currently lacking. Sullivan highlights that emotional support, safety planning, and tangible resources are all necessary resources for survivors. However, evidence suggests that advocacy for survivors is critical to ensuring their long-term wellbeing and safety. As highlighted in the discussion around the lack of adequate case management, it is understood that emotional support, safety planning, and tangible resources for survivors are already neglected. Nevertheless, there appears to be a cultural reluctance to advocate for survivors, destigmatize their experiences, and support them in advocating for themselves.

Sullivan's article suggests that advocates play a critical role in the lives of survivors. Sullivan's understanding of advocacy seems like an ideal form of case management. It appears as though Sullivan's desire for better advocacy is in line with this research's aspiration for better advocacy for unhoused T/NB individuals who also happen to be survivors. Sullivan's perspective puts advocacy at the forefront of what we collectively understand to be "case management". The article highlights that emotional support, information, and referrals are all important, but they do not serve individuals well without individual and systemic advocacy.

Advocacy Over Case Management

Sullivan emphasizes that an effective advocate, per findings from survivors, is someone who can (a) see the survivor as a whole person, (b) provide unconditional validation and

acceptance, and (c) actively work to mobilize resources (Sullivan, 2019). This approach can be applied to individuals who are facing homelessness and violence. The concept of ‘advocacy’ over ‘case management’ works towards a system change that contributes to the ongoing violence against T/NB individuals, which entails the criminal justice system, social services, legal services, healthcare, and housing (Sullivan, 2019). Sullivan acknowledges that the original movement for domestic violence prevention consistently highlighted advocacy at an individual and systemic level; however, new shelter models for survivors often focus on case management alone over advocacy.

The focus on case management places blame on the individual and re-traumatizes them. It places responsibility on them by telling them, "Here are all the things you can do to fix your situation," rather than saying, "This is a system failure; let's work towards justice together." The experiences of unhoused individuals and survivors of violence are deeply interconnected. The "Cornerstones of Advocacy" highlighted by Sullivan are not only applicable to survivors but to all unhoused individuals, but particularly applies to unhoused T/NB individuals due to their disproportionate exposure and vulnerability to violence.

The first cornerstone is safety planning. It is a detriment that none of the participants highlighted being offered safety planning services, failing to address the safety concerns that T/NB individuals face in shelters, on the streets, or by police officers. The second cornerstone focuses on providing every possible relatable resource while also concentrating on advocating for resource availability at the system level, this is the essential advocacy piece that has been recently placed on the backburner. The third cornerstone is trauma-informed care. Many shelters have adopted frameworks for trauma-informed care in the form of ‘buzzwords’, but they have failed to live up to the practice of this care. There is a greater need that encompasses inclusive,

gender-affirming mental health care that can be tailored to each individual. The concept of advocacy over case management fuels a collective mindset, cultivates community, and places the responsibility of reforming stigmatizing policies on everyone rather than the individual that was harmed.

More Work Needs to be Done

The first limitation of the study is its sampling strategy. Purposive sampling, while a perfect approach given the goal of gathering data from a specific and targeted population, could still have the limitation of having a sample that is not representative of the larger population of T/NB individuals facing houselessness in Denver. Robert Yin highlights in his book "Qualitative Research from Start to Finish" that one potential limitation of purposive sampling is that it can lead to researcher bias because the researcher may unconsciously select participants based on their own biases and preconceptions (Yin, 2021).

The sole researcher conducting interviews faced limitations in being fully present as a support for the participant after the interviews due to time constraints and a heavy workload. The research could have been stronger if there were additional researchers and individuals conducting interviews. With more support, additional care and advocacy could have been provided to the participants in order to live true to the values and recommendations of the research. Additionally, a larger sample size could provide better direction on how to navigate the specific challenges that unhoused Indigenous T/NB individuals face, as they were not largely included in the sample. In future studies, it is recommended that a multi-interviewer approach is done to limit interviewer bias. This would include protocols that require interviewers to compare and resolve differences in the data they collect (Yin, 2021).

Takeaways for HAND

The results of this study can help HAND more effectively advocate for unhoused T/NB individuals, particularly those who have experienced violence. HAND already encompasses many of the characteristics of an effective advocate. HAND can continue using person-centered approaches in creating advocacy strategies that are inclusive, gender-affirming, and put T/NB survivors of violence's well-being and security first. With this, they can offer acceptance and affirmation to T/NB individuals. The results of the research can be used by HAND to advocate for laws and procedures that lessen discrimination and promote inclusivity for T/NB people. By doing this, HAND may contribute to the development of a culture that is supportive, empowering, and de-stigmatizing for T/NB people who are survivors of violence.

HAND must center parts of their advocacy specific to T/NB individuals with the understanding that offering support, speaking out against injustices, and working towards de-stigmatization can be lifesaving for T/NB survivors of violence. With this, HAND can push for better resources, assistance, accessibility, and supportive systems with the knowledge gathered in this research. HAND should center the voices of T/NB survivors in the fight for safe, dependable, and trustworthy housing. HAND can continue campaigning for a Housing First model that stresses housing as a human right and prioritizes the eradication of housing barriers.

HAND can continue working to change the system that fuels the persistent violence against T/NB people. With inclusivity and belonging at the forefront of these discussions, HAND can use the study's data to push for laws that protect T/NB people from abuse and violence when advocating for Housing First. With this, HAND should center a discussions around ending the re-traumatization that individuals experience when working with case managers and shelter staff.

By prioritizing advocacy above case management, as mentioned above, HAND can work to reshape how structural flaws contribute to the continued violence that T/NB people face.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research aimed to explore the barriers that unhoused T/NB individuals face in obtaining stable housing. Through in-depth interviews with nine participants, the study found that the overall lack of affordable housing, discrimination from service providers, and systemic violence and stigma contribute to the traumatization and negative experiences that T/NB unhoused individuals face. The research highlights the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing houselessness. This approach should prioritize Housing First rather than relying on "band-aid" solutions to houselessness, trauma, and violence, as well as reviving a culture of advocacy and care for survivors of violence.

This study is a small but impactful starting point for thoroughly exploring the experiences of T/NB individuals who are unhoused. Due to the small sample size, further research with a larger and more diverse sample will be necessary to fully understand the complexities of the barriers that T/NB individuals face. Regardless of these shortcomings, the findings of this study provide a great deal of insight into the experiences of T/NB individuals who are unhoused in Denver and should be used to build upon efforts to end houselessness and violence.

It is vital to move away from the perpetual negative cycles of case management and sheltering and move towards a Housing First approach that combats houselessness and violence for T/NB individuals. The research affirms that Housing First is a solution that immediately addresses houselessness and works to combat the inequities T/NB face. This can immediately prioritize providing individuals with stable and affordable housing rather than pushing them through the ineffective and inequitable barriers of case management and sheltering. By focusing

on providing Housing First, individuals can address other challenges in their lives and move towards stability while they are safe and sheltered effectively.

Overall, it is vital for organizations and policymakers to address the discrimination, oppression, stigma, and violence faced by T/NB individuals. Anti-discrimination policies, increased resources for housing, and combating stigma can begin the work towards combating the current challenges that T/NB individuals face. There is a greater need to address the root causes of transphobia, discrimination and violence in order to create a world where T/NB individuals are able to live safely and authentically.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation Statement

Thank you so much for your participation in the Transgender Non-Binary Housing Barrier Survey. Hannah Fageeh is a graduate student at the University of Colorado Denver where she is completing their Master's Degrees in Public Administration and Gender Based Violence Studies.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this anonymous interview, you will be rewarded a gift card with a 25 dollar value for your participation. This interview will take about one hour to complete and will include questions regarding your experiences with houselessness and victimization along with some demographics questions. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue or have additional questions, please feel free to let us know.

All of your responses are confidential. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of how you and your peers view housing insecurity and accessibility. The purpose of this study is to understand what barriers Transgender and Non-Binary individuals face with houselessness and safety in Denver.

Some of the questions included in this interview could bring up past traumatic experiences and/or difficult discussion topics. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break, please don't hesitate to communicate your needs and they will be respected. You may withdraw your participation at any time without consequence.

Appendix B

I identify as... (check all that apply)

- ☐ Black
- ☐ Indigenous
- ☐ Hispanic/Latinx
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ White
- ☐ Other race
- ☐ Unknown race

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Gender non-conforming/fluid/non-binary
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Two-Spirit
- ☐ Questioning

- ☐ Under 18 years old
- ☐ 18-25 years old
- ☐ 26-54 years old
- ☐ Over 55 years old

- ☐ Person with a mental and/or physical disability and/or chronic illness
- ☐ English as a second language or non-english speaker
- ☐ Veteran

Appendix C

1. Can you reflect on any barriers you've faced when working with housing navigators/case managers in obtaining secure and stable housing? If you choose not to work with housing navigators/case managers, could you explain why?
2. Can you reflect on any barriers you've faced when seeking shelter services? If you choose not to live in shelters, could you explain why?
3. What services are lacking for unhoused transgender and non-binary people in the housing navigation process?
4. What types of housing amenities/features are a necessity for you? Do you feel that your needs have been considered in your housing navigation process?
5. What types of 'rules' or 'standards' are barriers to you in housing? What types of 'rules' or 'standards' would you want in housing?
6. (I will explain this tailored to each individual) Trauma informed care is a framework that aims to support people in feeling safe, it can create an environment where individuals overcome their fears of harm or betrayal. It is built on trust between case managers and clients. How have case managers/housing navigators/shelter staff demonstrated trauma-informed care with you? How have they demonstrated respect towards your identity (gender identity, sexuality or race)?
7. Could you explain how supported you feel in your identity as a transgender and non-binary individual? Do you have family support, close friends, a community? How has this impacted your experience with houselessness?
8. Do you consider yourself to be a survivor of violence? (interpersonal violence, domestic violence, or police brutality.)
9. What challenges come with being a survivor of violence that is working towards housing safety and stability? Could you explain if more resources were available to you as a survivor of violence?
10. What type of housing feels safest, reliable, and ideal to you? (community, food, resources, transit)
11. Can you explain how physically safe you have felt at shelters or encampments? (domestic violence or unhoused shelter)

**ARE YOU TRANSGENDER OR NON-BINARY
AND EXPERIENCING HOUSELESSNESS?
OR INTERSEX/GENDERQUEER/GENDER NON-CONFORMING?**

**IF SO, YOUR PARTICIPATION
IS NEEDED!**

HANNAH FAGEEH (A GRADUATE STUDENT) AND
HOUSEKEYS ACTION NETWORK DENVER (HAND)
ARE COLLECTING INFORMATION ON THE
EXPERIENCES OF UNHOUSED TRANSGENDER
AND NON-BINARY FOLKS.

HAND IS AN ORGANIZATION THAT FIGHTS FOR
HOUSING FOR ALL, DETERMINED BY PEOPLE
WITHOUT HOUSING, AND TO FIGHT FOR
HOUSING AS A PUBLIC RESOURCE FOR ALL –
NOT A COMMODITY FOR THE RICH.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE:

- YOU WILL BE AWARDED A \$25 VISA GIFT CARD.
- YOU WILL BE ASKED QUESTIONS AROUND YOUR BARRIERS TO STABLE HOUSING.
- THE INTERVIEW WILL TAKE 30-45 MINS.
- YOU WILL BE MET WHERE YOU ARE AT TO MAKE THE INTERVIEW EXTREMELY ACCESSIBLE.

CALL/TEXT/EMAIL HANNAH:
HANNAHFAGEEH@GMAIL.COM + 386-562-5122/
OR CONNECT WITH YOUR CASE MANAGER

GO TO [HOUSEKEYSACTIONNETWORK.COM/ABOUT/](https://housekeysactionnetwork.com/about/) FOR MORE INFO