The Stability Project
A Community Response to Homelessness

The Stability Project has been developed to identify, address and provide solutions to the 6 types of homelessness in America Today
Friends, welcome to the Stability Project!

We have been blessed to work with the homeless in our community since 1993, and we are just as excited today as we were in the beginning. Working side by side with broken, hurting people has given us a window into the causes and types of homelessness, helping us to find solutions that can bring lasting stability.

We’ve shifted from our initial belief that homelessness is about the lack of a house, job or money. We now know homelessness is more about a person’s lack of Relational Resources, something we explain later in the Stability Project.

In our country, traditional family units are breaking down more and more each year, and the problem of homelessness is growing bigger. The most vulnerable ones are the children who are being moved from one chaotic event to the next. Sadly, abuse, neglect and self-loathing become the hallmark of their lives. As teens, they begin to search for anything to relieve their pain—drugs, alcohol and sex being just a few of the dulling agents they use. One fix leads to another and the cycle of homelessness begins, affecting future generations.

As the Body of Christ, we can step in and make a difference. When we understand and recognize the causes and types of homelessness, it enables us to move forward and offer the kind of help that truly changes lives. For this purpose, we have written the Stability Project. We hope to shed light on a puzzling social issue in America, and at the same time, initiate a paradigm shift in the way people view and respond to homelessness.

We invite you to join us in helping a broken, hurting segment of our society find lasting stability. The good news is: Homelessness doesn't have to be a "life sentence."

Scott & Connie Payne
Ministers to the homeless

Personal Resources are the foundation upon which a stable life is built. Whatever the circumstances of a person’s homelessness, the cause can always be traced back to a deficiency in one or more of the three primary resources defined below. When a gap in primary resources threatens the stability of the individual, outside resources are sought to compensate.

1) Relational Resources: Significant people in our lives who become a support system when times get tough are Relational Resources. They can be parents, relatives or friends who care and are there when we need them. When relational resources are absent the potential for homelessness increases dramatically.

2) Inner Resources: Within each one of us is a unique blend of characteristics that helps us maintain stability in life: intelligence, attitude, temperament, physical attributes, values and spirituality are just a few of these inner attributes. When these are damaged, distorted or weak, the potential for homelessness increases.

3) Physical Resources: The assets we own or control, like real estate, bank accounts and material goods are Physical Resources. The quality of our Relational and Inner Resources determines the amount of Physical Resources we possess. The lack of Physical Resources can appear to be the cause of homelessness—but is instead a symptom of deficient Relational and Inner Resources.

Outside Resources: Any aid provided by a non-related source such as a government agency, church or humanitarian organization is an Outside Resource. Outside Resources often provide continuing supplies of Physical Resources which can actually hinder stability because it diminishes a person’s desire to move toward independence. Physical Resources must be carefully linked to the development of Relational and Inner Resources in order to make a lasting difference.
The Six Types of Homelessness

A one-size-fits-all formula for homelessness doesn’t exist, as illustrated below:

- Kelly and her husband were knocked out of bed by a lightning bolt. Soon, the house filled up with smoke and within seconds, they were homeless. Thankfully, relatives and friends gathered around and took them in until their home could be repaired.
- Donald was the son of a local prostitute. He never knew his father. His earliest memories were those of rejection and fear. Because he didn’t have a real home, Donald was moved in and out of shelters his whole childhood.

In order to truly help the homeless, we must first identify the most common types of homelessness, their primary causes, and the appropriate response for each. In this section, we have identified the 6 most common types:

1) Short-term Houselessness:

When a traumatic event occurs such as a house fire or natural disaster, people with strong Relational and Inner Resources and a sufficient amount of Physical Resources recover in a short period of time. Although technically homeless, they still have their “home”—those foundational personal resources that hold them together in a crisis. They don’t require the help of Outside Resources and are able to recover from their loss within a few weeks or months.

2) Long-term Houselessness:

Like Short-term Houselessness, the loss of housing is the result of a traumatic event. The main difference here is the limited amount of Physical Resources owned by the person or family. This makes recovery time longer, usually 3-6 months.

Relational Resources may get exhausted if the person or family doesn’t stabilize within this time frame, and Outside Resources may be needed for assistance. Should they still find it impossible to stabilize after 6 months, they would be categorized as Near Homeless.

3) Near Homelessness:

(Literally “one paycheck away from homelessness,” these folks overextend their Personal Resources to a point where any setback is detrimental. The loss of a job, a roommate or a vehicle could push them over the edge. Usually, a relative or friend will take them in, but it doesn’t last long when they don’t contribute or stabilize.

The Near Homeless will move often in their efforts to stay afloat and need Outside Resources to stay out of shelters. When agencies or churches give Physical Resources to the Near Homeless, it’s important to link relational-based classes, training, and community service to these resources. In other words, the amount of Physical Resources given to a person or family should directly correspond to their willingness to attend classes and do community service.

If they refuse to do these things, Physical Resources should be limited or discontinued until they do. This makes it easy to identify those who are willing to stabilize from those who are not.

The 3 remaining types of homelessness are what we more commonly see in shelters and on the street:

4) Environmentally Dysfunctional Homelessness:

These people have been exposed to, or raised in, toxic environments where they have experienced a series of traumatic events. Their Relational Resources are either broken, dysfunctional or non-existent. As a result, their Inner Resources are severely weakened or damaged, making it impossible to maintain Physical Resources. (Note: War veterans can fall into this category if their Inner Resources cannot withstand the traumatic events of war).

Self-Induced Homelessness:

The refusal to cooperate or submit to any form of authority causes Self-Induced homeless persons to eventually lose all Relational Resources. Their unmatched desire for control and independence keeps them unemployed and unable to maintain housing. They refuse good advice, make poor decisions, and insist that others meet their expectations in life.

Self-Induced Homeless persons often refuse to live within the rules of a shelter and seek independence on the street. They would most likely prefer a Street Homeless Shelter where both inside and outside sleeping areas would be made available away from public viewing.
6) Permanently Supported Homelessness:

This segment of the homeless population lacks all 3 kinds of Personal Resources due to mental or physical disability. They must rely upon Outside Resources to provide the goods and services needed to sustain life.

The basic needs of life—food, clothing, and shelter—should be provided with the realization that the Permanently Supported Homeless person will always function at his or her own personal level of ability. Outside Resources must be available to help.

As you become familiar with the 6 types of homelessness, you will notice the first 2 result from the loss (or damage) of a major Physical Resource—a house. Yet, because Relational and Inner Resources are intact, these persons rarely become chronically homeless. The remaining 4 types are the direct result of damaged, distorted or non-existent Relational and Inner Resources.

Relational Resources are the key to long-term stability and provide the foundation for healthy Inner Resources. When both of these are functioning and healthy, Physical Resources can be maintained.

An Example of Self-Induced Homelessness
by Scott Payne

One day, while sitting at a community meeting discussing the needs of the homeless in the Springfield area, a homeless woman named Barb leaned forward and said, “All I need is an address, a shower and clean clothing and then I can get a job and save up for my own place.”

Barb’s needs were straightforward and simple enough—especially since a room had just opened up at Inner City Mission. I told Barb about the room and said she could move in that very day. Immediately, Barb replied, “I can’t come in today because I have to get my stuff together.”

I said, “That’s okay, we can hold the room for you until tomorrow.”

“I can’t go to a shelter because I need privacy and I don’t like sleeping next to people I don’t know.”

“You won’t have to sleep in an open room,” I said. “We have private rooms for individuals and families.”

“I need a TV so I can keep up on the news.”

“We have a big-screen television in the living room and you can watch the news every day.”

“Well, I have to have a TV in my own room,” she insisted.

“We don’t have TVs in each room, and if the lack of TV viewing in your room is the only reason for not taking advantage of this opportunity to have an address, a shower and clean clothing, then what you stated earlier is just not true.”

I then told her we would keep the room open for 24 hours so she could think it over. Barb never came to the mission.

A Common Misconception

Many people believe the government has failed to allocate enough money to take care of homelessness. In truth, spending on homelessness in our country is unprecedented. The National Alliance to End Homelessness reports that our federal government spends 4.71 billion annually on homelessness, not including the hundreds of millions in state and local dollars spent each year.

The problems we have with homelessness in our country rest in the reality that Physical Resources cannot make up for the lack of Relational Resources. That is why thousands of local homeless programs have received federal funding over the past fifty years but have not produced a significant permanent reduction in homelessness.

The fact remains that when Physical Resources run out, persons fall back into homelessness. Not only do they fail to stabilize on their own, they become dependent on Outside Resources, creating a drain on the society as a whole.

The government is not equipped to handle the in-depth, relationship-based work that is needed to guide a person out of homelessness.

The Body of Christ: A Unique Role

We have identified two guiding principles that must be adhered to while working with the homeless if the greatest effectiveness is to be accomplished:

• Maintain an environment that gives what is needed to enhance the joy and peace of all participants at every level of transformation in the Stability Project (as found in Matthew 22:37-40).

• Community wide awareness, acceptance and unity of mission among those working toward poverty and homelessness alleviation (as asked for in John 17:20-23).

Relational problems can only be resolved with Relational Resources. Providing Relational Resources is what the Holy Word of God is about, and what the Body of Christ was designed to do (see Acts 2:42-47).

In the spirit of agape love—or God’s spirit—the Body of Christ is best equipped to come alongside people in need to help guide them toward stability.

As you continue to read The Stability Project you will find a shift from the theoretical to the practical application of Biblical concepts as they have been applied to Inner City Mission’s work with the homeless.
Addressing Street Homelessness

As we develop a Progressive Sheltering System (pages 10-11), we must accept that certain individuals will opt to remain in Street Homelessness. These persons come out of the Environmentally Dysfunctional, Self-Induced and Permanently-Supported homeless categories. For their own safety and that of the public, an area should be set aside for them and minor expectations instituted.

Safe Haven Shelter:
The Safe Haven Shelter will be the designated site for those unable or refusing to advance through the Progressive Sheltering System. A dormitory-style sleeping arrangement will be provided with bathroom, shower and laundry facilities. A common lounge and dining area will be available along with a basic feeding program. An outside sleeping area will be designated as a location for makeshift dwellings.

Minimal case management and mental health services will be available to maintain a safe environment. Camping out or panhandling will not be allowed in other parts of the community.

Minor children should not be living at the Safe Haven Shelter. If a parent refuses to move past this level, the Department of Children and Family Services must be contacted for the well-being of the child.

Street homeless will be encouraged but not required to enter the Progressive Sheltering system.

• Safe behavior toward self & others will be required at all times.
• Street homeless will have the option to participate in individual and group therapy designed to encourage movement toward stability.
• A photo ID & a background check will be provided at the Safe Haven Shelter.
• Physical and mental health observations will be documented.
• Street homeless will be encouraged to take part in day labor.
• Legal self-prescribed pain relievers will be permitted on property with an expectation of personal and community safety.

The desired outcome for this shelter is to provide basic needs while limiting access to non-specific or destructive Outside Resources. This will encourage persons to enter the Progressive Sheltering System for societal re-entry.
Progressive Sheltering System

The Progressive Sheltering System—with the help of the Body of Christ and the community—will give homeless persons in central Illinois the opportunity to get the help they need to re-enter society and attain stability. Movement toward stability begins when Street Homeless persons or Near Homeless persons move into the Emergency Shelter.

Emergency Shelter:
Each person or family will receive a single private room with access to common areas: a living room with TV, restrooms, showers, laundry facilities, and a kitchen-dining area. Visitors are allowed on a limited basis in the living and dining areas. Mail delivery and phone usage is available.

Stability for Life begins here at the Emergency Shelter. The focus of this initial stage is to bring calm to new arrivals. The majority carry turmoil from their past, so our goal is to help each person or family relax so they can begin to face personal issues. Adults will then receive case management and be expected to progress through the first 3 steps of Stability for Life (diagram, pg. 8) before moving on.

Transitional Housing:
Persons entering Transitional Housing have completed the first 3 steps of Stability for Life and are now considered Level 3 homeless. Here, we focus on attainable goals and personal potential leading to long-term stability.

The shelter itself will offer a pod of rooms for each person or family. Common areas, although larger, will remain the same as in the Emergency Shelter. This level lasts the longest as each person works through issues and receives individualized employment training, counseling and encouragement to move forward.

Permanent Housing:
When persons or families graduate from the "Master Apprentice" of Stability for Life and show potential for long-term stability, they enter Level 4. At this point, they can move into their own home or apartment (or Permanent Supportive Housing if necessary). Each will have a support group who will listen, give wise counsel and be a source of encouragement.

Progressive Sheltering System Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Entry</th>
<th>Near Homeless (Level 1) and Chronic Homeless (Safe Haven)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 2:</strong> Calming the Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter</td>
<td>Emergency Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Follow curfew &amp; safety regulations; Complete Personality Profile; Complete study: Boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Complete studies: Purpose Driven Life, Forgiveness, Lies We Believe, Safe People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Concept</td>
<td>Turn in copies of Social Security card, birth certificate &amp; current picture; Complete short &amp; long intake forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical/Mental</td>
<td>Complete course: Good Hygiene &amp; Food Safety; turn in list of medications &amp; health history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Education</td>
<td>Fill out education/work history form; Enter Work Program &amp; create Resume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addictions</td>
<td>Respect drug &amp; alcohol-free requirements on &amp; off-site; Take treatment (in or outpatient) as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>Agree to income management for 75% of income; Obtain payee as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 3:</strong> Promoting the Potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Housing</td>
<td>Transitional Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Complete Relationship Analysis; Complete studies: Safe People, Mom Factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Complete Spiritual Gift Analysis &amp; Value Analysis; Complete study: Forgiveness, Lies we Believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Concept</td>
<td>Complete Coping Skills Profile, DISC Profile &amp; Time Management Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical/Mental</td>
<td>Arrange &amp; show up for basic check-ups &amp; mental health assessments as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Education</td>
<td>Complete Career Choice Profile &amp; Employment Expectation profile, Secure employment or volunteer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addictions</td>
<td>Understand Zero Tolerance; Take addiction counseling as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>Manage own finances with oversight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level 4:</strong> Receiving the Reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Housing</td>
<td>Permanent Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Maintain positive relationships with family, friends &amp; acquaintances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Learn to recognize &amp; give what's needed in the lives of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Concept</td>
<td>Understand and accept one's own strengths &amp; weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical/Mental</td>
<td>Find balance in physical &amp; mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Education</td>
<td>Maintain work or volunteerism at the highest level of independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addictions</td>
<td>Maintain an addiction-free lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>Maintain a positive cash flow while fulfilling financial obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desired Outcomes for Lasting Stability</strong></td>
<td><strong>Desired Outcomes for Lasting Stability</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize positive &amp; negative relationships</td>
<td>Recognize positive &amp; negative relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehend &amp; apply concept of Agape love</td>
<td>Comprehend &amp; apply concept of Agape love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize one's own place in life</td>
<td>Recognize one's own place in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue physical &amp; mental health maintenance</td>
<td>Continue physical &amp; mental health maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live at the highest level of independence</td>
<td>Live at the highest level of independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the destructive nature of addictive behaviors</td>
<td>Understand the destructive nature of addictive behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live free of debt</td>
<td>Live free of debt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why the Stability Project?

The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock."

Matthew 7:25

In the final illustration of the greatest sermon ever preached, Jesus told us that the storms of life would come. The question is: Will these storms find us safe, secure, and living on the rock or will they find us struggling to survive on the sand?

Communities all across America are facing the sands of homelessness. It’s something that won’t go away and only gets worse if nothing is done. History shows that the viability of any society depends on the number of productive members. When that number decreases, society as a whole becomes unstable.

The Stability Project was developed to address homelessness in our community. It’s important that we understand the types and causes in order to know how to truly help.

The homeless in our community are “mired” in the sand and cannot find their way out. They need the Body of Christ and the community to come alongside.

Please take some time to read through The Stability Project and prayerfully consider how you can be a part in helping the homeless find lasting stability.