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Homeward Point-in-time subpopulation briefing document: Older Adults Experiencing homelessness, Jan. 2018

For organizations that receive funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a point-in-time (PIT) count of individuals experiencing homelessness is required every year. Homeward conducts a count, accompanied by a survey, every six months in order to gather current timely data that enables us to make decisions and measure our success in ending and preventing homelessness.

In January 2018, Homeward added topical questions about the experiences of older adults. This debriefing presents some data on this subpopulation.

Among the 365 homeless adults surveyed during the January 2018 PIT count, 47.1% ($n = 172$) were age 51 or older. Below are some details about these older adults. Comparable statistics for the people aged under 51 appear parenthetically, with the most striking differences highlighted in bold. Generally, older adults are more likely to be veterans, male, single, have a long-term disability, and have been homeless for a year or more.

- 25% are unsheltered. (25.6%)
- **29.0% are veterans. (12.5%)**
- 52.1% are African American/Black; 38.6% are White; 7.7% are Hispanic. (53.7%; 31.1%; 10.4%)
- **81.3% are male; 18.1% are female. (57.7%; 41.7%)**
- **1.2% are in families. (14.3%)**
- 67.1% have spent time in jail and/or prison. (73.5%)
- 22.5% indicated that they had been a victim of violence in the past year. (26.1%)
- **44.7% have a long-term disability. (33.3%)**
- 53.2% had their last permanent residence in Richmond, 7.9% in Henrico, and 6.5% in Chesterfield. (48.6%, 8.7%, 5.1%)
- 59.1% have been to the emergency department in the past year. (55.1%)
- **46.7% have been homeless for one year or more. (31.8%)**

In addition to the usual demographic and service usage questions in the PIT survey, Homeward added six additional questions on social isolation for those adults who were 51 years or older. These questions are from the De Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale and measure emotional and social loneliness. Homeless clients were surveyed in shelters, during street outreach, or at a community lunch program. Non-homeless adults were surveyed at a community lunch program and indicated that they spent the prior night in housing.

Note that due to a problem with the outreach version of the survey, questions 2 and 4 were omitted. This issue affected 28 homeless clients and 9 non-homeless clients. Missing data is reflected in the NA column in the tables below.

Answers are coded in green for positive/good answers and red for negative/bad answers and reflect the scoring of the instrument.

Homeless clients aged 51+ (N = 179; 174 responded to social isolation questions)

Now I have a few questions that relate to your feelings. I'm going to read a statement, and then you can let me know whether you think it is true for you. You can answer no (meaning not true at all for you), more or less, or yes (meaning very true for you).

Statement	No	More or less	Yes	NA (missing)
I experience a general sense of emptiness	84 (49.1%)	34 (19.9%)	53 (31.0%)	3
I miss having people around me	78 (53.4%)	22 (15.1%)	46 (31.5%)	28
I often feel rejected	106 (60.9%)	20 (11.5%)	48 (27.6%)	0
There are plenty of people I can rely on when I have problems	67 (46.5%)	35 (24.3%)	42 (29.2%)	30
There are many people I can trust completely	115 (66.1%)	28 (16.1%)	31 (17.8%)	0
There are enough people I feel close to	85 (48.9%)	31 (17.8%)	58 (33.3%)	0

Non-homeless clients aged 51+ (N = 46; all responded to social isolation questions)

Now I have a few questions that relate to your feelings. I'm going to read a statement, and then you can let me know whether you think it is true for you. You can answer no (meaning not true at all for you), more or less, or yes (meaning very true for you).

Statement	No	More or less	Yes	NA (missing)
I experience a general sense of emptiness	24 (52.2%)	12 (26.1%)	10 (21.7%)	0
I miss having people around me	25 (67.6%)	4 (10.8%)	8 (21.6%)	9
I often feel rejected	29 (63.0%)	6 (13.0%)	11 (23.9%)	0
There are plenty of people I can rely on when I have problems	9 (24.3%)	10 (27.0%)	18 (48.6%)	9
There are many people I can trust completely	22 (47.8%)	11 (23.9%)	13 (28.3%)	0
There are enough people I feel close to	14 (30.4%)	5 (10.9%)	27 (58.7%)	0