

Disrupting discrimination through *Community Conversations &* “stereotype cards”

Presented by:
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On behalf of:
AIRP Lived Expertise Committee & Research Team



Acknowledgements



Community
Engagement Initiative

- Aging in the Right Place (AIRP) Partnership team
- Lived Expertise Advisors (LEAs) who are co-developers of this project: Chris Danielsen, Nick Wennington, Dorothy Kestle, Michel Gauthier, Hilary Chapple, and Anne Cartledge
- SFU's Community Engagement Initiative
- Project assistant: Samantha Teichman



The problem:

- Discrimination, prejudice, exclusion, stigma, and stereotyping are commonly experienced by people with lived experiences of homelessness (PEH)
 - *Homeism*: Discrimination based on housing status
- Older PEH may also experience age-based discrimination & exclusion
 - *Ageism*: Discrimination based on age
 - Can result in a 'doubling' of exclusion & discrimination



The problem:

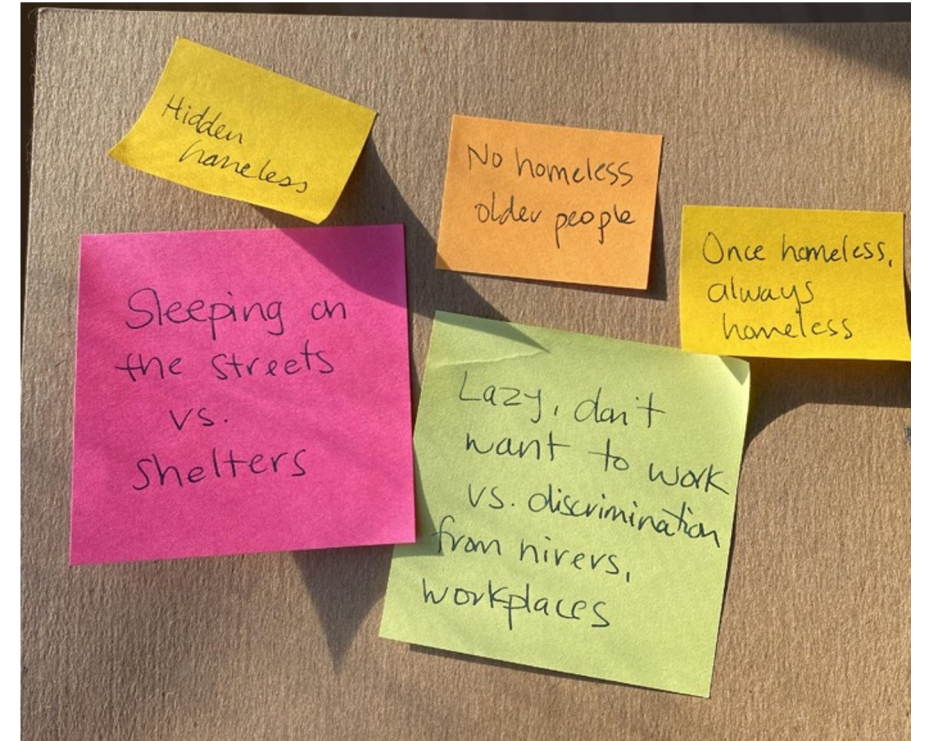
- **Stereotypes:** generalized and often harmful beliefs about a group or category of people
 - Linked to prejudice, stigma, exclusion
 - Perpetuated & reinforced over time
 - Can operate unconsciously
 - Can be internalized and directed towards the self

→ impact health & inclusion via multiple pathways



The idea:

Develop stereotype / “myth busting” cards that can be used to dispel harmful beliefs related to homelessness and those who have experienced it

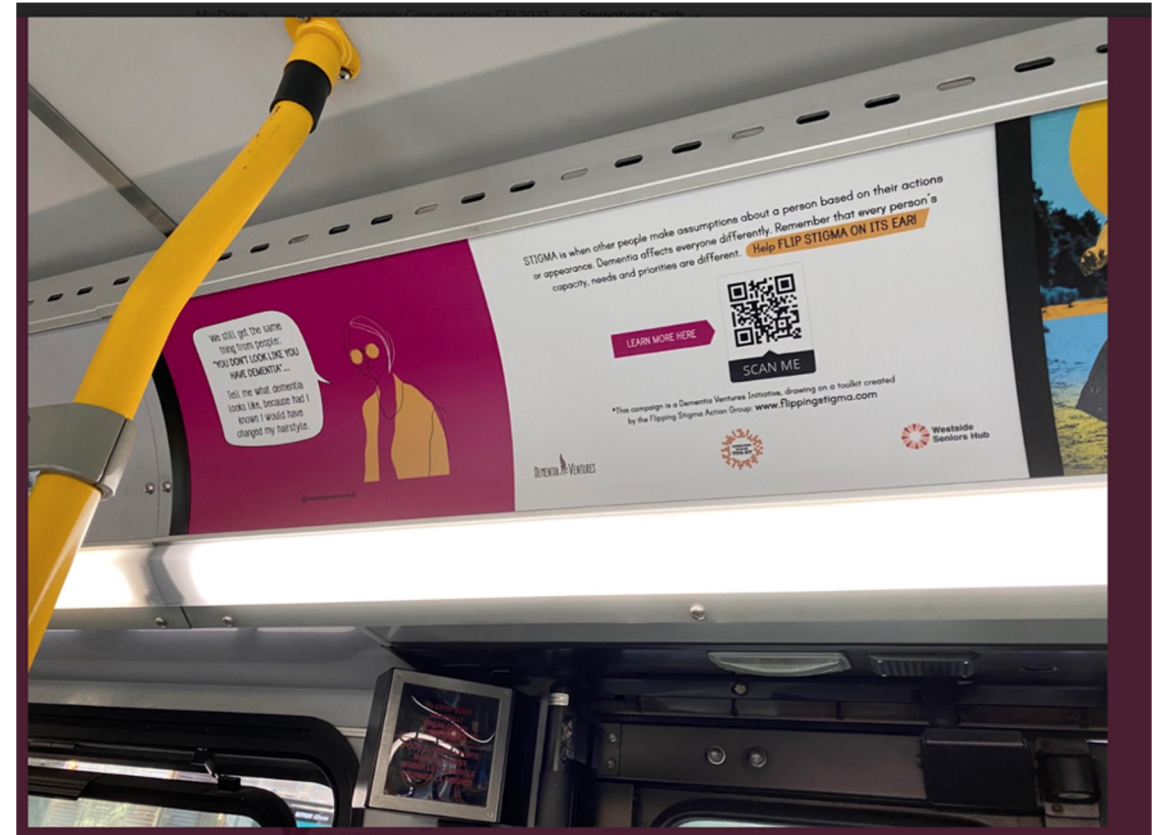


Some inspiration...

Myth Recycling doesn't actually help the environment

Fact Recycling keeps trash out of landfills and incinerators, which benefits our planet

Source: stanford.edu



Developing the cards

- Identify list of “myths” / stereotypes about homelessness and PEH
- Articulate the counternarratives to each stereotype
 - i.e., why is this a myth?
- Create postcard-sized images that present this information



Harmful myths & stereotypes about PEH

PEH are criminals

PEH don't have skills, life skills, etc.

People always experience homelessness because of their life choices

Employment will solve everything

Housing should be earned

Housing is accessible and affordable

All PEH experience addiction(s)

Homelessness is always preventable if people try hard enough

Homelessness does not happen to families

Homeless once, homeless always

PEH are lazy and don't want to work

PEH don't seek help

Older people can't / don't become homeless

PEH not be allowed in some parts of the city

Drafting, reviewing, and co-developing

Some early drafts:

Myth

"People who are homeless don't have any life skills"



Fact

People who are homeless are teachers, nurses, construction workers, etc. who have diverse skills and expert knowledge in many areas



FACT

People can become homeless at any age

MYTH: PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS DON'T HAVE ANY LIFE SKILLS.

FACT: PEOPLE WITH VARIED BACKGROUNDS & MANY SKILLS CAN EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS, INCLUDING WORKING PROFESSIONALS SKILLED LABOURERS, ETC.

DIAN OBSERVATORY ON HOMELESSNESS

Myth

"All people experiencing homelessness are sleeping on the street or in shelters."



Fact

There are varying degrees of homelessness - unsheltered, sheltered, fleeing abuse, hidden homeless - and variations in how older family members are treated.

Some of the finished cards...



RÉALITÉ : L'itinérance a plusieurs visages : sans-abri, en refuge, itinérance cachée, fuite d'une situation d'abus.



Apprenez-en plus

Source: Observatoire canadien sur l'itinérance



MYTH:

"Homelessness does not happen to older adults."



REALITY:

People can become **homeless at any age**, including ages 65+.

Read more





MYTH:

"All people experiencing homelessness are sleeping on the street or in shelters."



REALITY: There are **varying degrees of homelessness** – such as unsheltered, sheltered, fleeing abuse, hidden homeless.



SFU

Read more

Source: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness



MYTH:

"Housing is affordable and accessible for seniors."



REALITY: "Affordable housing" is **not affordable or sustainable** for seniors living on fixed income.



[Read more](#)

Source: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness



MYTH:

"People who are homeless are lazy and don't want to work."



REALITY: It's not always easy to re-enter the workforce. People with experiences of homelessness can face **discrimination** from employers.



Read more

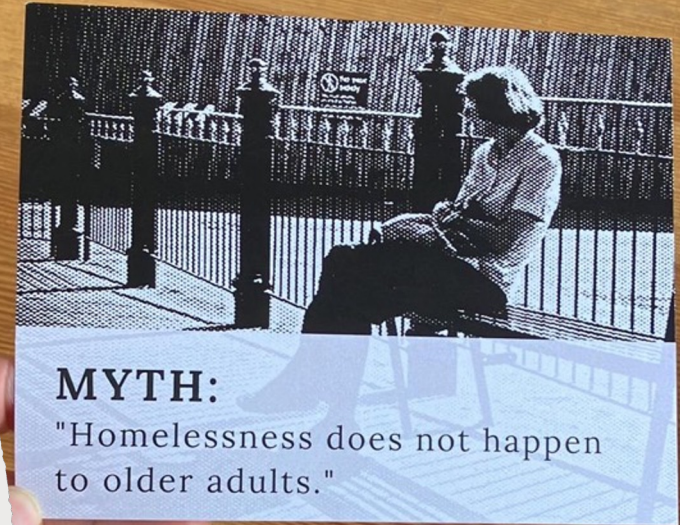


Source: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

How do stereotype cards help?

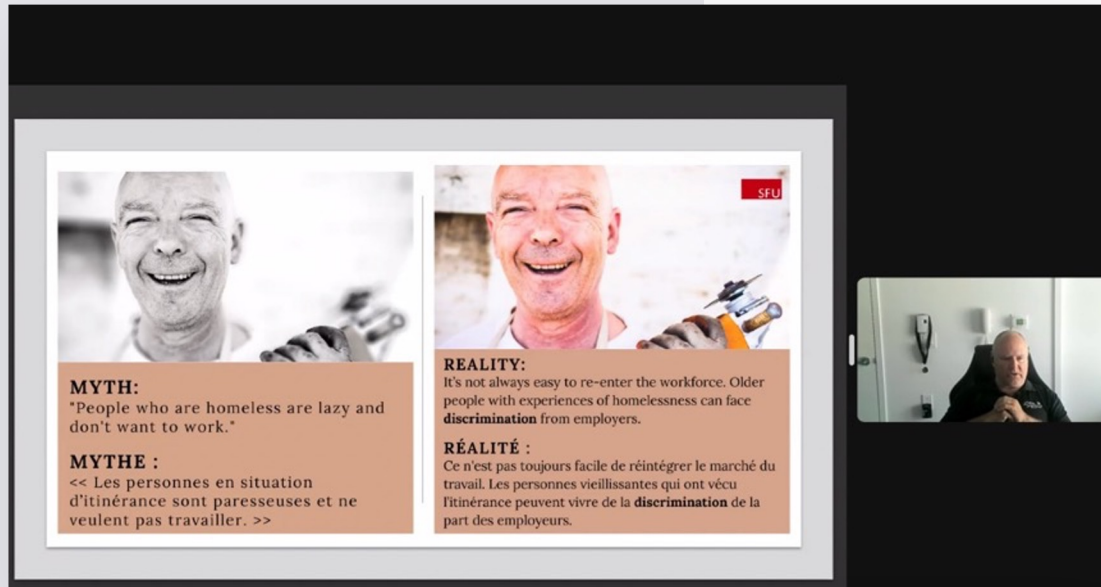


- Challenging stereotypes directly and explicitly
- Starting conversations & creating opportunities to share
- But also... the co-development process itself was valuable



What's next?

- Develop additional cards
- Built up a “myth busting” gallery online
- De-brief & evaluate a series of in-person panel events and webinars
- Evaluate the impact of these cards & events

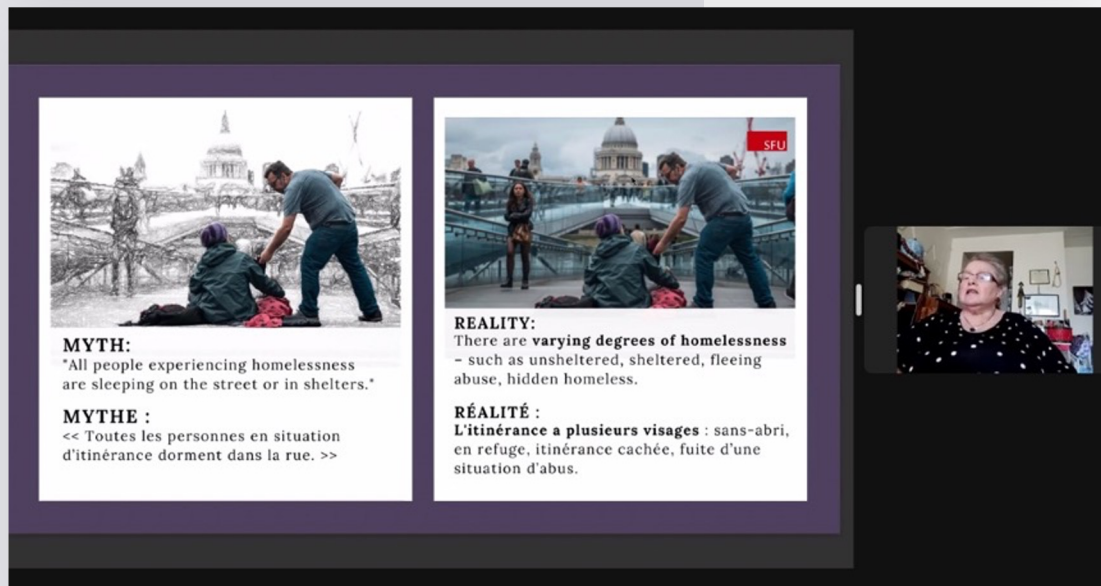


MYTH:
"People who are homeless are lazy and don't want to work."

MYTHE :
<< Les personnes en situation d'itinérance sont paresseuses et ne veulent pas travailler. >>

REALITY:
It's not always easy to re-enter the workforce. Older people with experiences of homelessness can face **discrimination** from employers.

RÉALITÉ :
Ce n'est pas toujours facile de réintégrer le marché du travail. Les personnes vieillissantes qui ont vécu l'itinérance peuvent vivre de la **discrimination** de la part des employeurs.



MYTH:
"All people experiencing homelessness are sleeping on the street or in shelters."

MYTHE :
<< Toutes les personnes en situation d'itinérance dorment dans la rue. >>

REALITY:
There are **varying degrees of homelessness** – such as unsheltered, sheltered, fleeing abuse, hidden homeless.

RÉALITÉ :
L'itinérance a plusieurs visages : sans-abri, en refuge, itinérance cachée, fuite d'une situation d'abus.

To learn more or
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<https://www.sfu.ca/airp.html>

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