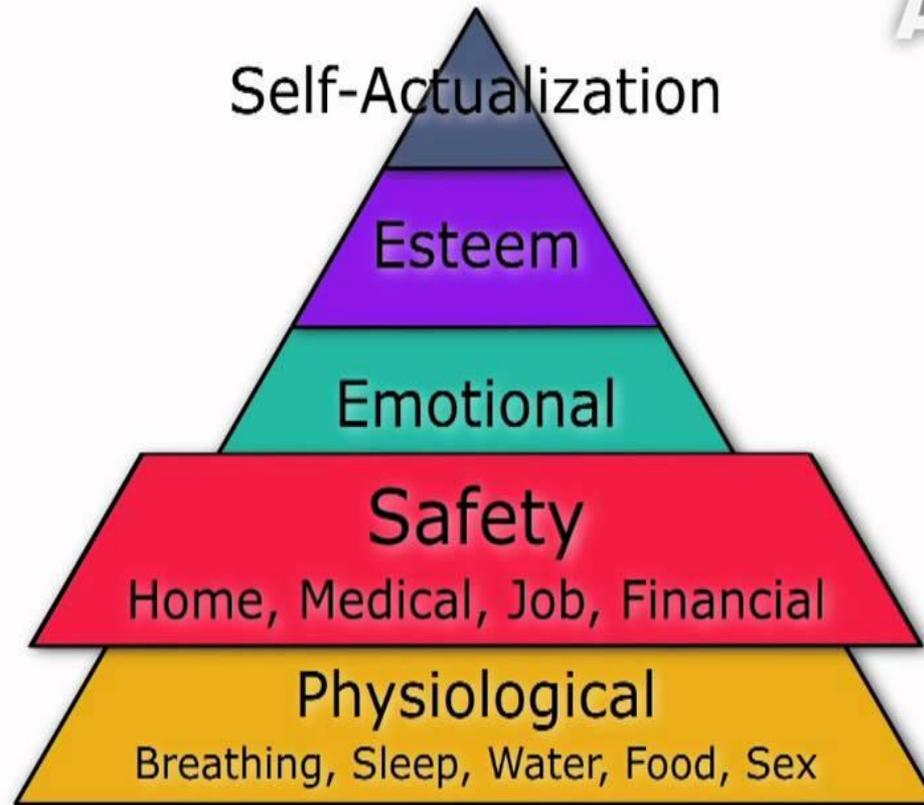


Caroline Maher Norris

- Manager of Support to Live Independently (SLI) service on behalf of 4 Dublin Local Authorities.
- Manager of Dublin Simon Visiting Tenancy Support Service (Prevention) in DCC
- Chair of Homeless Network Prevention Subgroup.







Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Mental Health Reform and Dublin Simon Community

Impacts of homelessness on mental health of children

Mental health difficulties

- Strong international evidence that children who experience a period of homeless are at significantly higher risk of experiencing mental health difficulty.
- Evidence for rate of mental health difficulties among homeless children in Ireland is very limited.
- Research has shown that “the strongest predictor of emotional and behavioural problems in both homeless and housed poor children is their **mother’s level of emotional distress**”.

Trauma

- Many children who become homeless have gone through the traumatic experience of physical and sexual abuse
- During the developmental period of childhood, exposure to trauma can affect a young person's sense of self, self-esteem, future outlook, ability to manage stress, stunt emotional growth and can make them more susceptible to victimisation in later life.
- Adolescents who are lacking in emotional, familial, societal and cultural supports then become less protected against the effects of trauma exposure

Research conducted in Ireland has shown that a connection exists between family experiences of homelessness and later periods of homelessness.



'Preventing homelessness to improve health and wellbeing' - Homeless Link UK 2015

- Preventing homelessness has obvious benefits for people's housing outcomes, but there is substantial evidence about how acting early also reduces health inequalities and improves well-being.
- Three stages of prevention:
 - Primary-minimises risk. (Early Intervention)
 - Secondary-targets groups or individuals at risk
 - Tertiary-rapid rehousing/resettlement and minimising repeat homelessness.
- Findings:
 - Gaps in primary prevention-mainly housing led
 - Gaps in evidence
 - Gaps in intervention for certain groups – targeting certain groups at secondary or tertiary stages.

www.homeless.org.uk



Barriers to Early Intervention – Case Study - Katie

- Katie was referred to the SLI service after being allocated a flat with her two children from her local authority. She had been living in emergency accommodation for over a year and her twin girls were born there while she was homeless
- When the twins turned 4mths Katie was put into a first floor apartment complex with no lift. She was desperate to leave homelessness so accepted it. Soon it became apparent that accessibility to and from apartment was extremely challenging. She is unable to carry both babies down the stairs at the same time meaning she needs help when she is going out. She cannot carry one baby down at a time as it would mean leaving one at the bottom of the stairs while she goes back to the flat to get the other one.
- Katie has recently been suffering from a physical issue with her leg, despite it being addressed through support from her GP, her mobility is poor at present.
- Katie had previously been linked with a family support service who were giving her practical and emotional support as Katie has no family living in Ireland and is unable to rely on her friends often.
- Katie's SLI worker contacted the Family support service and was informed that resources wouldn't allow for them to provide family support for Katie and her children going forward.
- The SLI worker contacted the PHN and requested home help. Home help refused to link in and stated currently referrals were reserved for elderly people in the area and resources wouldn't allow the justification of such a referral



Current Prevention Services and Initiatives.

Tenancy Protection Service (TPS) – Threshold

Protocol with Dept of Social Protection to negotiate increases to rent supplement for families at risk of homelessness.

1,099 families protected from homelessness to date through this intervention.

Very welcome initiative however it is already at crisis stage and **not early intervention**.



Current Prevention Services and Initiatives.

Dublin Simon and Focus Ireland Tenancy Support Services

- Aim to Prevent Tenancy Breakdown through providing visiting support and advice and information.
- Community Based and across all 4 Dublin Local Authorities.
- One of the few services that come to people in their homes.
- Offer child and/or family support options.
- Referrals come through local authorities, community services and self referral options.



Current Prevention Services and Initiatives.

Tenancy Advice Service in Partnership with Citizens Information 2,4 & 6

- Based in the Carmelite Centre on Aungier St.
- Thursday mornings 9:30am – 1pm

DRHE

- Prevention Working Group to be formed with Dublin Regional Homeless Executive.



SLI (Support to Live Independently)

- Provided by **Dublin Simon and Focus/McVerry** to all individuals and households leaving homelessness.
- No specific family support package or family support staff.
- Shortage of key workers/case management in homeless services means no assessment of which families need more support putting families at further risk of homelessness.



Child and Family Support Role

- October 2015 Dublin Simon will be providing family support for those specific families engaged with the SLI/VTSS services.
- Committed to prevention and early intervention
- Compliment existing child and family services by having a knowledge of homeless families experiences and those at risk



Further thoughts

- Need for engagement with all ‘actors’ ,community services, local authorities, primary care etc.
- We need to ensure families who are homeless have access to support, advice and information
- Need to target families who have needs beyond ‘economic’ issues.
- Need ‘Early Warning Systems’ in the community to identify homeless risk e.g.
 - “are you paying your rent?”
 - “how is your relationship with your landlord?”
- Better take up of Tenancy Support Services.
- Public Awareness campaign for Early Intervention
- Early Intervention is cost effective
- Decrease the dependency on Private rented Market

A Story.....

- A person walking beside a river sees someone drowning. This person jumps in, pulls the victim out, and begins artificial respiration. Then another drowning person calls for help. The rescuer jumps into the water again and pulls the second victim out. This process repeats itself several times until finally, much to the amazement of the bystanders who have gathered to watch this drama, the rescuer, even though the screams of yet another victim can be clearly heard from the river, gets up from administering artificial respiration and begins to walk upstream. One of the bystanders calls out: “Where are you going? Can’t you hear the cries of the latest victim?” The rescuer replies “You take care of him. I’m going upstream to find out who’s pushing all these people in and to see whether I can stop it.” He might have added “ I’m also going to find out why all of these people can’t swim and see whether I can teach them how”. (Egan 1984a: 23)



Important Contact Details

Threshold Tenancy Protection Service

1800 454 454

Dublin Simon Visiting Tenancy Support Service

01-6354888 – DCC Area

Focus Ireland Prevention Tenancy Support

0877796819 (Lisa Gallagher) – FCC, SDCC,

DLRDCC

